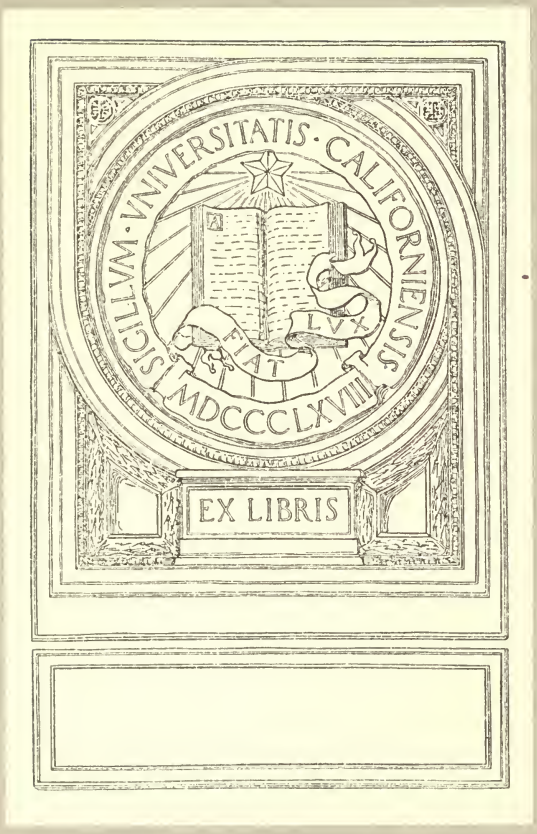
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THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ADAMS.

THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN ADAMS,

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

HIS GRANDSON

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

VOL. X.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY.
1856.

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GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

CONTINUED.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

CONTINUED.

TO BENJAMIN STODDERT.

Quincy, 15 October, 1811.

Dear Stoddert, — Your obliging letter of August 16th was presented to me by your son-in-law, Dr. Thomas Ewell, and his amiable lady, your daughter. Although I was confined with a wounded leg, which is not yet healed, and afflicted with a series of misfortunes, afflictions, and deaths among my tenderest connections, such as rarely happens to any man even in this troublesome world, I was not the less obliged to you for giving me an opportunity of seeing this sensible and amiable couple. These causes, however, have retarded my answer, and I hope will plead my excuse. I am happy to hear that your health is good, and I hope your happiness unalloyed.

I am as happy as ever I was in my life, as happy as I can ever expect to be in this world, and I believe as happy as any man can be, who sees all the friends of his youth dropping off about him, and so much sickness among his nearest relations, and who expects himself to drop in a very short time. Public affairs move me no more than private. I love my country and my friends, but can do very little for either. Reconciled and resigned to my lot in public and private, I wait with patience for a transfer to another scene.

After an introduction so solemn and gloomy, you will be surprised to find me turn to so ludicrous a subject as friend Timothy. You have seen his addresses to the people, in which he has poured out the phials of his vengeance against me, after

having nourished and cherished it in his bosom a dozen years. He has implicated General Sam Smith and his brother Robert Smith, the late Secretary of State, in a manner that ought in my opinion to bring them out in vindication of themselves and me.

God knows, I never made any bargain with them or either of them. I never knew or suspected that they had any animosity against Pickering, more than they had against you or McHenry, Wolcott or Lee. No hint was ever given to me, directly or indirectly from either, that they wished Pickering removed, or that they would vote for me on any condition, or in any circumstances whatsoever. When I appointed Winchester Judge, in opposition to the wish of Robert Smith, as you know very well, I had the best opportunities to conciliate the Smiths, if I had been so disposed. Pickering knows this as well as you. How, then, can he tell such an abominable story? I cannot think that he believes it himself. Had I not scruples about setting an example of a President's vindicating himself against such attacks from a mortified, disappointed, and vindictive minister, I should be at no loss for reasons to justify the removal of Mr. Pickering.

B. STODDERT TO JOHN ADAMS.

Bladensburg, 27 October, 1811.

I sincerely thank you for your kind letter of the 15th. It always affords me the highest satisfaction to hear of you and from you, and more particularly when I hear favorable accounts of your health and contentment.

I have seen and regretted the attack of Colonel Pickering on you, in a point affecting your moral character. In relation to any intrigue of my countrymen, the Smiths, with you, for his removal from the office of State, I have at all times felt the strongest conviction that you never did descend to such baseness, not only because I knew you were incapable of such degradation, but because I had reason to know that there was no kind of private intercourse between you and General Smith (and his brother was not at the seat of government), about the

time of Colonel Pickering's removal. I knew it from this circumstance. A day or two before the New York election, in which Colonel Burr exerted himself with so much success as to produce a result that disappointed every body, and at a moment when members of Congress and all about the government believed that city would be entirely federal, General Smith and a Senator of high standing called on me at my office, and expressed their satisfaction with most of your measures, though disapproving of some which they seemed disposed rather to ascribe to the influence of others than to you, and signified a desire to have a friendly interview with you, and asked my opinion if such an interview would be agreeable. My reply, in substance, was, that I could not doubt it, but that I would speak to you on the subject, and let them know.

It so happened that I did not speak to you before the result of the New York election was known in Philadelphia. This result afforded Mr. Jefferson a prospect of the Presidential chair he seemed not to have had before. But for this result, I question whether it would not have been decided, about that time, by his friends, to suspend his pretensions for four years longer, and that their support, if from no other motive, for the chance of having influence in your administration, should be given to you.

If I never afterwards mentioned to you my visit from the General and the Senator, it was because I thought I perceived that their views had changed, with the change of prospect occasioned by the result of the New York election. They spoke to me no more, and I am very confident they avoided you.

I am not good at remembering dates; and, never meaning to be a public man, I never kept memoranda of any political transactions. But I believe this election was just before the close of the session of Congress; and that at the close, or a day or two before, Colonel Pickering was removed. On the morning of the day of the removal, you communicated to Mr. Lee and myself, who chanced to meet at your house without being summoned, your intention, and observed, your mind had been made up on the subject before the commencement of the session, but that, to avoid a turbulent session (Colonel Pickering having many warm friends in both Houses), you had delayed to take the step until the close of the session. You said you respected

Colonel Pickering for his industry, his talents, and his integrity, but mentioned instances to show that he wanted those feelings a Secretary of State should possess for the character of a President, and wanted temper to enable you to make peace with France, or preserve it with England; and, upon something suggested by Mr. Lee or myself to induce reconsideration on your part, you added, that you felt it a sacred duty to make a change in the Department of State, and proposed, that Mr. Lee or myself should communicate your decision to Colonel Pickering in terms least calculated to hurt his feelings. We both too sincerely respected him to undertake a task so disagreeable. I have never since conversed with Mr. Lee on this subject; but I do presume, were he to relate the occurrence, his relation would agree substantially with mine.

Colonel Pickering, like most honest, warm-tempered men, may be too partial, perhaps, in tracing to the best motives the actions of his friends, and too prone to ascribe to the worst the conduct of those whom he does not like. After hearing of the prediction of Mr. R. Smith at Annapolis (which I presume has been within the last two years), made ten or twelve days before his removal, that *he would be removed*, it was not extraordinary that he should imagine Mr. R. Smith, his brother, the General, and others, had successfully intrigued with you for his removal as the price of their support. And when he made the charge against you, I cannot, from what I think I know of his character, persuade myself for a moment to doubt that he did most religiously believe in its truth.

Were I to venture to account for Mr. R. Smith's prediction at Annapolis, it would be in this way. The visit to me, of which I have spoken, shows that the most respectable of that party, with whom Mr. Smith was closely linked, were at least balancing in their minds whether their surest road to more influence in public affairs would not be to attach themselves to you, especially as your reëlection seemed at that time certain. Colonel Pickering, of all your ministers, was most obnoxious to those gentlemen. And it might have been contemplated by them, with the knowledge of Mr. R. Smith, to ask his removal in return for their support. And as it was too well known that the proper harmony between the President and Secretary of State did not exist, Mr. Smith being sure, as he thought, the

offer would be made, might conclude, without great violence to probability, that the offer would be made, and, unacquainted with your honorable principles, that it would not be rejected.

If any use can be made of this feeble, though sincere testimony, in removing from that reputation you so justly value a transient cloud, most freely do I consent it should be so used. I may dissatisfy men, whose friendship I prize most highly, and make others my enemies, by this; but consideration of self never did nor ever shall deter me from doing an act of justice.

With my best respects, &c., &c.

BEN. STODDERT.

TO SAMUEL SMITH.

Quincy, 25 November, 1811.

SIR, — Colonel Pickering, in his letters or addresses to the people of the United States, has represented to the world, and supported by certificates or testimonies, which some persons think plausible, that a corrupt bargain was made between yourself and your brother on one part, and me on the other, that I should dismiss the then Secretary of State from his office, in consideration of your votes and influence for me at the next election of President and Vice-President.

As such a kind of traffic would be as dishonorable to yourself and your brother as to me, I think it would become all three of us to take some prudent measures to disabuse the public, if not to vindicate our characters.

For my own part, I declare upon my honor, and am at any time ready to depose upon oath, that no such communication, intimation, or insinuation ever passed, directly or indirectly, between me and yourself, or your brother. You must, therefore, know and feel the imputation both upon me and yourself to be false and injurious. Consequently I can see no objection that either of us can have to clearing up this matter before the public. I should be obliged to you, Sir, for your sentiments upon this subject, and continue to be, with much respect, your most obedient and humble servant.

Memorandum. Wrote on the same day, in the same words, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Hon. Robert Smith at Baltimore. J. A.

ROBERT SMITH TO JOHN ADAMS.

Baltimore, 30 November, 1811.

Sir, — In reply to your letter of the 25th of this month, I have no hesitation in stating to you, that, at no period of your administration did I consider or understand that any kind of bargain or arrangement had, directly or indirectly, in any manner or form, been proposed or made, between yourself on the one part, and my brother and myself, or either of us, on the other part, in relation to the dismission of Mr. Pickering from the office of the Department of State.

Be pleased to accept an assurance of the great respect, with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your humble servant,

R. Smith.

SAMUEL SMITH TO JOHN ADAMS.

Washington, 1 December, 1811.

Sir, — I had the honor, yesterday, to receive your letter of the 25th ultimo, in which you say, "that Colonel Pickering in his letters to the people of the United States has represented to the world, that a corrupt bargain was made between yourself and brother on the one part, and me on the other, that I should dismiss the then Secretary of State from his office, in consideration of your votes and influence for me, at the next election of President and Vice-President."

You appear to be of opinion, that some notice ought to be taken of this assertion to disabuse the public, justly observing that no such communication had ever passed directly or indirectly between you, my brother, and myself.

I have taught myself to despise every attack upon my political character; and I cannot persuade myself, that any man acquainted with your high character will believe that you would have permitted any person to have made to you a proposition so very dishonorable. For myself I declare, that I never held any conversation with you, respecting Colonel Pickering; that I never heard you utter one word disrespectful of that gentle-

man; that I never did insinuate or express a wish to you that you would dismiss Colonel Pickering from office, nor did I ever insinuate or say, that I would, for any consideration whatsoever, support you by my vote or influence at the election of President and Vice-President. I never believed myself in your confidence. On the contrary, I did at that period think that you were personally hostile to me. It is well known, that I opposed your first election and your reëlection, openly, on political ground. It is not known to me, that you had any knowledge of my brother Robert at the period alluded to; if any communication had ever passed between you and him, it must have been known to me. I never knew of any, and am certain that none did take place.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

S. Smith.

TO ROBERT SMITH.

Quincy, 6 December, 1811.

Sir, — Yesterday I received from the post-office in this town your favor of the 30th of November, in answer to my letter to you of the 25th of that month.

I thank you, Sir, for the promptitude, punctuality, and accuracy of your reply, which is fully satisfactory. It is such, indeed, as I knew it must be from the immutability of truth.

TO SAMUEL SMITH.

Quincy, 13 December, 1811.

Sir, — I have received your letter of the 1st of this month in answer to mine of the 25th of November. It is not less frank and candid than prompt and punctual.

I have only to remark that you were certainly mistaken when you thought that "I was personally hostile to you." Your brother Robert I never saw in my life, nor had any communication with him of any kind while I had any share in government.

TO BENJAMIN RUSH.

Quincy, 25 December, 1811.

I never was so much at a loss how to answer a letter as yours of the 16th.

Shall I assume a sober face and write a grave essay on religion, philosophy, laws, or government?

Shall I laugh, like Bacchus among his grapes, wine vats, and bottles?

Shall I assume the man of the world, the fine gentleman, the courtier, and bow and scrape, with a smooth, smiling face, soft words, many compliments and apologies; think myself highly honored, bound in gratitude, &c., &c.?

I perceive plainly enough, Rush, that you have been teasing Jefferson to write to me, as you did me some time ago to write to him. You gravely advise me "to receive the olive branch," as if there had been war; but there has never been any hostility on my part, nor that I know, on his. When there has been no war, there can be no room for negotiations of peace.

Mr. Jefferson speaks of my political opinions; but I know of no difference between him and myself relative to the Constitution, or to forms of government in general. In measures of administration, we have differed in opinion. I have never approved the repeal of the judicial law, the repeal of the taxes, the neglect of the navy; and I have always believed that his system of gunboats for a national defence was defective. To make it complete, he ought to have taken a hint from Molière's "*Femmes précieuses*," or his learned ladies, and appointed three or four brigades of horse, with a Major-General, and three or four brigadiers, to serve on board his galleys of Malta. I have never approved his non-embargo, or any non-intercourse, or non-importation laws.

But I have raised no clamors nor made any opposition to any of these measures. The nation approved them; and what is my judgment against that of the nation? On the contrary, he disapproved of the alien law and sedition law, which I believe to have been constitutional and salutary, if not necessary.

He disapproved of the eight per cent. loan, and with good

reason. For I hated it as much as any man, and the army, too, which occasioned it. He disapproved, perhaps, of the partial war with France, which I believed, as far as it proceeded, to be a holy war. He disapproved of taxes, and perhaps the whole scheme of my administration, &c., and so perhaps did the nation. But his administration and mine are passed away into the dark backwards, and are now of no more importance than the administration of the old Congress in 1774 and 1775.

We differed in opinion about the French revolution. He thought it wise and good, and that it would end in the establishment of a free republic. I saw through it, to the end of it, before it broke out, and was sure it could end only in a restoration of the Bourbons, or a military despotism, after deluging France and Europe in blood. In this opinion I differed from you as much as from Jefferson; but all this made me no more of an enemy to you than to him, nor to him than to you. I believe you both to mean well to mankind and your country. I might suspect you both to sacrifice a little to the infernal Gods, and perhaps unconsciously to suffer your judgments to be a little swayed by a love of popularity, and possibly by a little spice of ambition.

In point of republicanism, all the difference I ever knew or could discover between you and me, or between Jefferson and me, consisted,

1. In the difference between speeches and messages. I was a monarchist because I thought a speech more manly, more respectful to Congress and the nation. Jefferson and Rush preferred messages.

2. I held levees once a week, that all my time might not be wasted by idle visits. Jefferson's whole eight years was a levee.

3. I dined a large company once or twice a week. Jefferson dined a dozen every day.

4. Jefferson and Rush were for liberty and straight hair. I thought curled hair was as republican as straight.

In these, and a few other points of equal importance, all miserable frivolities, that Jefferson and Rush ought to blush that they ever laid any stress upon them, I might differ; but I never knew any points of more consequence, on which there was any variation between us.

You exhort me to "forgiveness and love of enemies," as if I considered, or had ever considered, Jefferson as my enemy. This is not so; I have always loved him as a friend. If I ever received or suspected any injury from him, I have forgiven it long and long ago, and have no more resentment against him than against you.

You enforce your exhortations by the most solemn considerations that can enter the human mind. After mature reflection upon them, and laying them properly to heart, I could not help feeling that they were so unnecessary, that you must excuse me if I had some inclination to be ludicrous.

You often put me in mind that I am soon to die; I know it, and shall not forget it. Stepping into my kitchen one day, I found two of my poor neighbors, as good sort of men as two drunkards could be. One had sotted himself into a consumption. His cough and his paleness and weakness showed him near the last stage. Tom, who was not so far gone as yet, though he soon followed, said to John, "You have not long for this world." John answered very quick: "I know it, Tom, as well as you do; but why do you tell me of it? I had rather you should strike me." This was one of those touches of nature which Shakspere or Cervantes would have noted in his ivory book.

But why do you make so much ado about nothing? Of what use can it be for Jefferson and me to exchange letters? I have nothing to say to him, but to wish him an easy journey to heaven, when he goes, which I wish may be delayed, as long as life shall be agreeable to him. And he can have nothing to say to me, but to bid me make haste and be ready. Time and chance, however, or possibly design, may produce ere long a letter between us.

TO THOMAS McKEAN.

Quincy, 2 June, 1812.

Our ancient and venerable friend Clinton is gone before us. It had long been my intention to write to him, but while I was busied about many things perhaps of less importance, he has

slipped out of my reach. I am determined no longer to neglect to write to you, lest I should glide away, where there is no pen and ink.

Nearly thirty-eight years ago our friendship commenced. It has never been interrupted, to my knowledge, but by one event. Among all the gentlemen with whom I have acted and lived in the world, I know not any two who have more uniformly agreed in sentiment upon political principles, forms of government, and national policy, than you and I have done, except upon one great subject — a most important and momentous one, to be sure. That subject was the French revolution. This, at the first appearance of it, you thought a "minister of grace." I fully believed it to be "a goblin damned." Hence all the estrangement between us, that I know, or ever suspected. There is no reason that this should now keep us asunder, for I presume there can be little difference of opinion at present upon this subject. When Pultney accepted a peerage, some droll wit wrote, —

> "Of all the patriot things that Pultney writ,
> The earl of Bath confutes them every bit."

We may now say, —

> "Of all the glorious things French patriots writ,
> The emperor confutes them every bit."

There can be no question of honors or profits, or rank or fame, between you and me at present. Personal friendship and private feelings are all that remain. I should be happy to hear of your health and prosperity, but I cannot conclude without one political observation. In ancient times Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia agreed very well. Why should they be at variance now?

I hope, Sir, you will excuse this intrusion, and believe me to be still, with much esteem, your friend and servant.

THOMAS McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 13 June, 1812.

On my return from a tour to the State of Delaware, I found your kind letter of the 2d instant, and thank you for this mark of esteem.

Our venerable friend Clinton has gone before us; so has the illustrious Washington, eleven years ago; and I have nearly outlived all my early acquaintance. I remain the only surviving member of the first American Congress, held in the city of New York in October, 1765; and but three more, of whom you are one, remain alive of the second, held in this city in September, 1774. It was my fate to be delegated to that trust annually during the revolutionary war with Great Britain, until the preliminary articles of peace were signed in 1782, which afforded me an opportunity of knowing every member of Congress during the whole of that time; and I declare with pleasure, and also with pride, that I embraced the political sentiments of none with more satisfaction (being congenial with my own) than yours, nor do I recollect a single question in which we differed.

It is true, I was a friend to the revolution in France, from the assembly of the Notables until the king was decapitated, which I deemed not only a very atrocious but a most absurd act. After the limited monarchy was abolished, I remained in a kind of apathy with regard to the leaders of the different parties, until I clearly perceived *that* nation was incapable at *that* time of being ruled by a a popular government; and when the *few* and afterwards an *individual* assumed a despotic sway over them, I thought them in a situation better than under the government of a mob, for I would prefer any kind of government to such a state, even tyranny to anarchy. On this subject, then, I do not conceive we differed widely.

My dear Sir, at this time of our lives there can certainly be no question, as you observe, of honors, profits, rank or fame, between us. I shook hand with the world three years ago, and we said farewell to each other. The toys and rattles of childhood would, in a few years more, be probably as suitable to me as office, honor, or wealth; but, I thank God, the faculties of my mind are as yet little, if any thing, impaired, and my affec-

tions and friendships are unshaken: I do assure you that I venerate our early friendship, and am happy in a continuance of it.

Since my exemption from official and professional duties, I have enjoyed a tranquillity never (during a long protracted life) heretofore experienced, and my health and comforts are sufficient for a reasonable man.

Our country is at this moment in a critical situation; the result is in the womb of fate. Our system of government, *in peace*, is the best in the world; but how it will operate *in war*, is doubtful. This, however, is likely to be soon put to the test, and I sincerely regret it.

There is a cheerful air in your letter that evidences health, peace, and a competency, which that you may long enjoy is the sincere wish and ardent prayer of, dear Sir, your old friend and most obedient servant

THOMAS MCKEAN.

TO THOMAS MCKEAN.

Quincy, 21 June, 1812.

I have received your kind letter of the 13th of this month with emotions like those of two old friends after a separation of many years, such as we may suppose Ulysses to have felt on meeting one of his ancient associates (not one of the suitors) on his return to Ithaca.

Your name among the members of Congress in New York, in October, 1765, is, and has long been a singular distinction. I wish you would commit to writing your observations on the characters who composed that assembly, and the objects of your meeting. Otis and Ruggles are peculiarly interesting to me, and every thing that passed on that important occasion is and will be more and more demanded (and it is to be feared, in vain) by our posterity.

Of the Congress, in September, 1774, there remains Governor Johnson, of Maryland, Governor McKean, of Pennsylvania, Governor Jay, of New York, Judge Paine, of Massachusetts, and John Adams, not forgetting our venerable Charles Thomson, Secretary.

You had an opportunity that was denied me in 1778, 1779,

1780, 1781, 1782. I was in Europe from 1778 to 1788. There was a great change in Congress soon after 1778. The Massachusetts men were chosen of a very different stamp from Hancock, Sam Adams, and Gerry. Higginson, Gorham, King, Jackson, and Lowell were a batch of loaves of a very different flour from their predecessors. I would now give any thing for your knowledge of their oratory, dialectics, and principles and opinions. This nation now groans, and future ages, I fear, will have reason to rue the hunting of that day. After the peace, New York and Pennsylvania followed the example of Massachusetts, and brought in lukewarmness instead of zeal, not to say toryism in the place of whiggism.

I acknowledge that the most unaccountable phenomenon I ever beheld, in the seventy-seven years, almost, that I have lived, was to see men of the most extensive knowledge and deepest reflection entertain for a moment an opinion that a democratical republic could be erected in a nation of five-and-twenty millions of people, four-and-twenty millions and five hundred thousand of whom could neither read nor write.

My sentiments and feelings are in symphony with yours in another particular. The last eleven years of my life have been the most comfortable of the seventy-seven. I have never enjoyed so much in any equal period. Mr. Jefferson, I find, is equally happy. I have had opportunity, however, to know that the illustrious Washington was not, and that to his uneasiness in retirement great changes in the politics of this country were to be attributed, perhaps for the better, possibly for the worse. God knows. I am as cheerful as ever I was; and my health is as good, excepting a quiveration of the hands, which disables me from writing in the bold and steady character of your letter, which I rejoice to see. Excuse the word quiveration, which, though I borrowed it from an Irish boy, I think an improvement in our language worthy a place in Webster's dictionary. Though my sight is good, my eyes are too weak for all the labor I require of them; but as this is a defect of more than fifty years standing, there are no hopes of relief. The trepidation of the hands arising from a delicacy, or, if you will, a morbid irritability of nerves, has shown itself at times for more than half a century, but has increased for four or five years past, so as to extinguish all hopes that it will ever be less.

The danger of our government is, that the General will be a man of more popularity than the President, and the army possess more power than Congress. The people should be apprised of this, and guard themselves against it. Nothing is more essential than to hold the civil authority decidedly superior to the military power.

Wishing you life as long as you desire it, and every blessing in it, I remain, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 28 June, 1812.

I know not what, unless it were the prophet of Tippecanoe, had turned my curiosity to inquiries after the metaphysical science of the Indians, their ecclesiastical establishments, and theological theories; but your letter, written with all the accuracy, perspicuity, and elegance of your youth and middle age, as it has given me great satisfaction, deserves my best thanks.[1]

It has given me satisfaction, because, while it has furnished me with information where all the knowledge is to be obtained that books afford, it has convinced me that I shall never know much more of the subject than I do now. As I have never aimed at making any collection of books upon this subject, I have none of those you have abridged in so concise a manner. Lafitau, Adair, and De Bry were known to me only by name.

The various ingenuity which has been displayed in inventions of hypotheses to account for the original population of America, and the immensity of learning profusely expended to support them, have appeared to me, for a longer time than I can possibly recollect, what the physicians call the *literæ nihil sanantes*. Whether serpents' teeth were sown here and sprung up men; whether men and women dropped from the clouds upon this Atlantic island; whether the Almighty created them here, or whether they emigrated from Europe, are questions of no moment to the present or future happiness of man. Neither

[1] This letter is not published in Mr. Randolph's edition of Jefferson. It relates entirely to the Indians, their manners and habits.

agriculture, commerce, manufactures, fisheries, science, literature, taste, religion, morals, nor any other good will be promoted, or any evil averted, by any discoveries that can be made in answer to these questions.

The opinions of the Indians and their usages, as represented in your obliging letter of the 11th June, appear to me to resemble the platonizing Philo, or the philonizing Plato, more than the genuine system of Judaism.

The philosophy both of Philo and Plato is at least as absurd; it is indeed less intelligible. Plato borrowed his doctrines from oriental and Egyptian philosophers, for he had travelled both in India and Egypt. The oriental philosophy, imitated and adopted in part, if not the whole, both by Plato and Philo, was, 1. One God, the good. 2. The ideas, the thoughts, the reason, the intellect, the logos, the ratio of God. 3. Matter, the universe, the production of the logos, or contemplations of God. This matter was the source of evil.

Perhaps the three powers of Plato, Philo, the Egyptians and Indians, cannot be distinctly made from your account of the Indians; but,

1. The great Spirit, the good, who is worshipped by the kings, sachems, and all the great men in their solemn festivals, as the author, the parent of good.

2. The devil, or the source of evil; they are not metaphysicians enough as yet to suppose it, or at least to call it matter, like the wiseacres of antiquity and like Frederic the Great, who has written a very silly essay on the origin of evil, in which he ascribes it all to matter, as if this was an original discovery of his own.

The watch-maker has in his head an idea of the system of a watch, before he makes it. The mechanician of the universe had a complete idea of the universe before he made it, and this idea, this logos, was almighty, or at least powerful enough to produce the world; but it must be made of matter, which was eternal. For creation out of nothing was impossible, and matter was unmanageable. It would not and could not be fashioned into any system, without a large mixture of evil in it, for matter was essentially evil.

The Indians are not metaphysicians enough to have discovered this *idea*, this logos, this intermediate power between

good and evil, God and matter. But of the two powers, the good and the evil, they seem to have a full conviction; and what son or daughter of Adam and Eve has not?

This logos of Plato seems to resemble, if it was not the prototype of the *Ratio and its Progress*, of Manilius, the astrologer, of the *Progress of the Mind*, of Condorcet, and the *Age of Reason*, of Tom Paine. I would make a system, too. The seven hundred thousand soldiers of Zengis, when the whole or any part of them went to battle, set up a howl which resembled nothing that human imagination has conceived, unless it be the supposition that all the devils in hell were let loose at once to set up an infernal scream, which terrified their enemies and never failed to obtain them victory. The Indian yell resembles this; and therefore America was peopled from Asia.

Another system. The armies of Zengis, sometimes two, three, or four hundred thousand of them, surrounded a province in a circle, and marched towards the centre, driving all the wild beasts before them — lions, tigers, wolves, bears, and every living thing — terrifying them with their howls and yells, their drums and trumpets, &c., till they terrified and tamed enough of them to victual the whole army. Therefore the Scotch highlanders, who practise the same thing in miniature, are emigrants from Asia. Therefore, the American Indians, who, for any thing I know, practise the same custom, are emigrants from Asia or Scotland.

I am weary of contemplating nations from the lowest and most beastly degradations of human life to the highest refinement of civilization. I am weary of philosophers, theologians, politicians, and historians. They are immense masses of absurdities, vices, and lies. Montesquieu had sense enough to say in jest, that all our knowledge might be comprehended in twelve pages in duodecimo; and I believe him in earnest. I could express my faith in shorter terms. He who loves the workman and his work, and does what he can to preserve and improve it, shall be accepted of him.

I also have felt an interest in the Indians, and a commiseration for them, from my childhood. Aaron Pomham, the priest, and Moses Pomham, the king of the Punkapaug and Neponset tribes, were frequent visitors at my father's house, at least seventy years ago. I have a distinct remembrance of their

forms and figures. They were very aged, and the tallest and stoutest Indians I have ever seen. The titles of king and priest, and the names of Moses and Aaron, were given them, no doubt, by our Massachusetts divines and statesmen. There was a numerous family in this town, whose wigwam was within a mile of this house. This family were frequently at my father's house, and I, in my boyish rambles, used to call at their wigwam, where I never failed to be treated with whortleberries, blackberries, strawberries, or apples, plums, peaches, &c., for they had planted a variety of fruit trees about them; but the girls went out to service and the boys to sea, till not a soul is left. We scarcely see an Indian in a year. I remember the time when Indian murders, scalpings, depredations, and conflagrations, were as frequent on the eastern and northern frontiers of Massachusetts as they are now in Indiana, and spread as much terror. But since the conquest of Canada all this has ceased; and I believe with you that another conquest of Canada will quiet the Indians forever, and be as great a blessing to them as to us.

The instance of Aaron Pomham made me suspect that there was an order of priesthood among them; but according to your account, the worship of the good spirit was performed by the kings, sachems, and warriors, as among the ancient Germans, whose highest rank of nobility were priests; the worship of the evil spirit by the conjurors, jongleurs, præstigiatores.

We have war now in earnest. I lament the contumacious spirit that appears about me, but I lament the cause that has given too much apology for it, the total neglect and absolute refusal of all maritime protection and defence. Money, mariners, and soldiers would be at the public service, if only a few frigates had been ordered to be built. Without this, our Union will be but a brittle China vase, a house of ice, or a palace of glass.

TO SAMUEL B. MALCOM.

Quincy, 6 August, 1812.

Your favor of July 11th was duly received. Your resolution to subjugate yourself to the control of no party, is noble; but

have you considered all the consequences of it? In the whole history of human life this maxim has rarely failed to annihilate the influence of the man who adopts it, and very often exposed him to the tragical vengeance of all parties.[1]

There are two tyrants in human life who domineer in all nations, in Indians and Negroes, in Tartars and Arabs, in Hindoos and Chinese, in Greeks and Romans, in Britons and Gauls, as well as in our simple, youthful, and beloved United States of America.

These two tyrants are fashion and party. They are sometimes at variance, and I know not whether their mutual hostility is not the only security of human happiness. But they are forever struggling for an alliance with each other; and, when they are united, truth, reason, honor, justice, gratitude, and humanity itself in combination are no match for the coalition. Upon the maturest reflection of a long experience, I am much inclined to believe that fashion is the worst of all tyrants, because he is the original source, cause, preserver, and supporter of all others.

Nothing short of the philosophy of Zeno, Socrates, Seneca, and Epictetus could ever support an ancient, and nothing short of the philosophy of Jesus could ever support a modern, in the resolution you have taken. Nothing less than the spirit of martyrdom is sufficient; for martyrdom will infallibly ensue. Not always in flames at the stake, not always in the guillotine; but in lies, slanders, insults, and privations, oftentimes more difficult to bear than the horrors of Smithfield or the *Place de Louis XV.*

Men have suffered martyrdom for party and for fashion in sufficient numbers; but none for contempt of party and fashion, but upon principles of the highest order.

But to descend from these romantic heights. I wish to know the name and age of your son, and the meaning of the letter B in your name. Your printed publications I am anxious to see. I am sorry you left your practice at the bar. There is the scene of independence. Cannot you return to it? Integrity

[1] Mr. Malcom had been Mr. Adams's private secretary during a part of his Presidential term. He had just been an unsuccessful applicant for a judicial office under the federal government, to obtain which he had solicited Mr. Adams's aid. Mr. Jefferson had also been applied to. His letter to President Madison respecting it is in Mr. Randolph's collection. Vol. iv. p. 175.

and skill at the bar, are better supporters of independence than any fortune, talents, or eloquence elsewhere. A man of genius, talents, eloquence, integrity, and judgment at the bar, is the most independent man in society. Presidents, governors, senators, judges, have not so much honest liberty; but it ought always to be regulated by prudence, and never abused.

Judge Vanderkemp is a great man, a star of the first magnitude under a thick cloud.

Smith has been the enemy of no man but himself; I lament the loss to the nation of military talents and experience, but I fear it is irremediable.

Without entering into any moral, political, or religious discussions of the subject of private combats, and individual administration of justice in one's own case, I cannot but lament that the sacred, solemn bench of justice should exhibit perpetual exemplifications of the practice before the people. This is not conformable to the policy even of Europe, where duelling is not carried to such rancorous, deliberate, and malicious excess as it is in America. Aristides, I do not remember to have read.[1] Colonel Burr, Attorney-General Burr, Senator Burr, Vice-President Burr, almost President Burr, has returned to New York. What is to be his destiny?

Emulation, rivalry, ambition, have unlimited scope under our forms of government. We have seen enough already to admonish us what we have to expect in future. My poor coarse *boudoir*, five or six-and-twenty years ago, held up mirrors in which our dear countrymen might have seen their pictures. If this is vanity, it is also cool philosophy.

From your real well-wisher.

TO WILLIAM KETELTAS.

Quincy, 25 November, 1812.

Sir, — I have received your polite letter of the 6th of the month and your present of the "Crisis." You will excuse a

[1] A pamphlet with this signature, ascribed to Mr. W. P. Van Ness, who obtained the office for which Mr. Malcom had applied. He was Colonel Burr's second in the duel with Mr. Hamilton.

question or two. In page first, you say, "Our administrations, with the exception of Washington's, have been party administrations." On what ground do you except Washington's? If by party you mean majority, his majority was the smallest of the four in all his legislative and executive acts, though not in his election.

You say, "our divisions began with federalism and anti-federalism." Alas! they began with human nature; they have existed in America from its first plantation. In every colony, divisions always prevailed. In New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, and all the rest, a court and country party have always contended. Whig and tory disputed very sharply before the revolution, and in every step during the revolution. Every measure of Congress, from 1774 to 1787 inclusively, was disputed with acrimony, and decided by as small majorities as any question is decided in these days. We lost Canada then, as we are like to lose it now, by a similar opposition. Away, then, with your false, though popular distinctions in favor of Washington.

In page eleventh, you recommend a "constitutional rotation, to destroy the snake in the grass;" but the snake will elude your snare. Suppose your President in rotation is to be chosen for Rhode Island. There will be a federal and a republican candidate in that State. Every federalist in the nation will vote for the former, and every republican for the latter. The light troops on both sides will skirmish; the same northern and southern distinctions will still prevail; the same running and riding, the same railing and reviling, the same lying and libelling, cursing and swearing, will still continue. The same caucusing, assemblaging, and conventioning.

In the same page eleventh, you speak of a "portion of our own people who palsy the arm of the nation." There is too much truth in this. When I was exerting every nerve to vindicate the honor, and demand a redress of the wrongs of the nation against the tyranny of France, the arm of the nation was palsied by one party. Now Mr. Madison is acting the same part, for the same ends, against Great Britain, the arm of the nation is palsied by the opposite party. And so it will always be while we feel like colonists, dependent for protection on France or England; while we have so little national public

opinion, so little national principle, national feeling, national patriotism; while we have no sentiment of our own strength, power, and resources.

I thank you, Sir, for reminding me, in page twelfth, of my "many blunders in my administration," and should have been still more obliged to you, if you had enumerated them in detail, that I might have made a confession of them one by one, repented of them on conviction, and made all the atonement for them now in my power. In the same page, you observe, that "you never knew how far I extended my views as to a maritime force." I will tell you, Sir. My views extend very far — as far as Colonel Barré's, when, in his last speech in parliament, he exclaimed, "Who shall dare to set limits to the commerce and naval power of this country?" Yet I know that Washington city was not built in a day, any more than Rome. I am not for any extravagant efforts. Your plan of a ship of the largest size for the whole, and a frigate of the largest size for each State, would satisfy me for the present.

Your last sentence is a jewel, "a monarchy of justice, an aristocracy of wisdom, and a democracy of freedom."

As I never knew your person, nor heard your name, till I read it in your letter, I hope you will excuse the freedom of your obedient servant.

TO J. B. VARNUM.

Quincy, 5 January, 1813.

. . . . . .

The foundation of an American navy, which I presume is now established by law, is a grand era in the history of the world. The consequences of it will be greater than any of us can foresee. Look to Asia and Africa, to South America and to Europe for its effects. My private opinion had been for frigates and smaller vessels, but I rejoice that the ideas of Congress have been greater. The four quarters of the world are in a ferment. We shall interfere everywhere. Nothing but a navy under Heaven can secure, protect, or defend us.

It is an astonishment to every enlightened man in Europe.

who considers us at all, that we have been so long insensible and inattentive to this great instrument of national prosperity, this most efficacious arm of national power, independence, and safety.

I could give you many proofs of this, but I will confine myself to two. In June, 1779, I dined with Monsieur Thevenard, intendant of the navy at Lorient, certainly one of the most experienced, best read, and most scientific naval commanders in Europe. That excellent officer said to me, in the hearing of the Chevalier de la Luzerne, Mr. Marbois, and twenty officers of the French navy, "Your country is about to become the first naval power in the world." My answer was, "It is impossible to foresee what may happen a hundred, or two or three hundred years hence, but there is at present no appearance of probability of any great maritime power in America for a long time to come." "Hundred years!" said Thevenard, "It will not be twenty years before you will be a match for any maritime powers of Europe." "You surprise me, Sir; I have no suspicion or conception of any such great things. Will you allow me to ask your reasons for such an opinion." "My reasons!" said Mr. Thevenard, "My reasons are very obvious. You have all the materials, and the knowledge and skill to employ them. You have timber, hemp, tar, and iron, seamen and naval architects equal to any in the world." "I know we have oak and pine and iron, and we may have hemp; but I did not know that our shipwrights were equal to yours in Europe." "The frigate in which you came here," said Mr. Thevenard (the Alliance, Captain Landais) "is equal to any in Europe. I have examined her, and I assure you there is not in the king's service, nor in the English navy, a frigate more perfect and complete in materials or workmanship." "It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to hear your opinion. I know we had or might have materials, but I had not flattered myself that we had artists equal to those in Europe." Mr. Thevenard repeated with emphasis, "You may depend upon it, there is not in Europe a more perfect piece of naval architecture than your Alliance, and indeed several other of your frigates that have already arrived here and in other ports of France." My reply was, "Your character forbids me to scruple any opinion of yours in naval affairs; but one thing I know, we delight so much in

peace and hate war so heartily that it will be a long time before we shall trouble ourselves with naval forces. We shall probably have a considerable commerce and some nurseries of seamen, but we had so much wild land, and the most of us loved land so much better than sea, that many years must pass before we should be ambitious of power upon the ocean. We had land enough. No temptation to go abroad for conquests. If the powers of Europe should let us alone, we should sleep quietly for ages without thinking much of ships of war."

I returned to America, and staid about three months, when Congress sent me to Europe again. We landed at Ferrol, in Spain. In a few days a French squadron of five ships of the line came in. I was soon invited to dine with the Admiral, or, as the French call him, *Général* or *Chef d'Escadre*, the Count de Sade, with all the officers of the squadron, on board his eighty gun ship. At table, in the hearing of all the company, the Count said to me, "Your Congress will soon become one of the great maritime powers." "Not very soon, Monsieur le Comte; it must be a long time first." "Why a long time? No people have such advantages." "There are many causes in the way." "What difficulties? No nation has such nurseries for seamen so near it. You have the best timber for the hulks of ships, and best masts and spars; you have pitch, tar, and turpentine; you have iron plenty, and I am informed you grow hemp; you have skilful ship-builders. What is wanting?" "The will, Monsieur le Comte; the will may be wanting and nothing else." "We have a maxim among us mariners, that with wood, hemp, and iron, a nation may do what it pleases. If you get your independence, as I doubt not you will, the trade of all nations will be open to you, and you will have a very extensive commerce, and such a commerce will want protection." "We must have a considerable commerce, but our lands will be so much out of proportion to our trade, that if the powers of Europe do not disturb us, it must be ages before we shall want a navy, or be willing to bear the expense of it."

I said I would give you two anecdotes. I will add a third. In 1778 I went to France in the Boston, frigate. We took a very rich prize commanded by a captain who had served twenty years in the British navy, several of them as a lieutenant. The captain became very curious to examine the ship. Captain

Tucker allowed him to see every part of her. As we lived together in the cabin, we became very intimate. He frequently expressed to me his astonishment. He said he had never seen a completer ship; that there was not a frigate in the royal navy better built, of better materials or more perfectly equipped, furnished, or armed. "However," he added, "you are the rising country of the world, and if you can send to sea such ships as this, you will soon be able to do great things."

TO JOHN LANGDON.

Quincy, 24 January, 1813.

I feel an irresistible propensity to compare notes with you, in order to ascertain whether your memory and mine coincide in the recollection of the circumstances of a particular transaction in the history of this country. As it lies in my mind, Captain John Manly applied to General Washington, in Cambridge, in 1775, informed him that British transports and merchant ships were frequently passing and repassing unarmed, and asked leave to put a few guns on board a vessel to cruise for them. Washington, either shrinking from the boldness of the enterprise, or doubting his authority, prudently transmitted the information to Congress in a letter. When the letter was read, many members seemed much surprised; but a motion was made, and seconded, to commit it to a special committee. Opposition was made to this motion, and a debate ensued; but the motion prevailed by a small majority. The committee appointed were John Langdon, Silas Deane, and John Adams. We met, and at once agreed to report a resolution, authorizing General Washington to fit and arm one or more vessels for the purpose. A most animated opposition and debate arose upon this report, but the resolution was carried by a small majority. Under the authority of this resolution, Washington fitted out Manly, who soon brought in several prizes, the most important of which was that transport loaded with soldiers, arms, ammunition, and that immortal mortar, which was called the Congress, and finally drove the British army out of Boston, and

their fleet out of the harbor. This splendid success inspired new courage into Congress. They appointed a new committee, consisting of yourself, Governor Hopkins, Richard Henry Lee, Mr. Gadsden, and me, to purchase, arm, equip, officer, and man ships. We met every night, and, in a short time, had the Alfred, Columbus, Cabot, Andrew Doria, Providence, at sea under Commodore Hopkins. The naval enterprise of Congress increased fast. They soon appointed a committee of one from each State, of which you was one, and ordered twelve frigates to be built.

My recollection has been excited lately by information from Philadelphia, that Paul Jones has written in his journal, "My hand first hoisted the American flag," and that Captain Barry used to say, that the "first British flag struck to him." Both these vain boasts I know to be false, and, as you know them to be so, I wish to have your testimony to corroborate mine.

It is not decent nor just that those emigrants, foreigners of the south, should falsely arrogate to themselves merit that belongs to New England sailors, officers, and men. Wishing you a healthy, pleasant year, I remain your old friend.

JOHN LANGDON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Portsmouth, 27 January, 1813.

Respected Sir, — I had the honor of receiving by the last mail your letter of the 24th instant, by which I see your time is taken up, and your mind continually on the stretch, for the support and honor of our beloved country. You request me to call to mind "the circumstances of a particular transaction in the history of this country," to which I answer that, upon reading your correct statement of the proceedings of Congress on our naval matters, the appointment of Committees, of which we were a part, the struggle we had to begin our little navy, and the opposition that was made by many members of Congress, it brings to my recollection the circumstances that took place in 1775, in all which, as far as I can recollect, I most perfectly coincide with you. The appointment of Manly, and his

successes, must be well known throughout the United States. As to Paul Jones, if my memory serves me, pretending to say that "his hand first hoisted the American flag," and Captain Barry, that "the first British flag struck to him," they are both unfounded, as it is impressed on my mind that many prizes were brought into the New England States before their names were mentioned.

I am, dear Sir, always happy to hear from you that you are in good health, and able still to continue your preëminent services to your country.

Mrs. Langdon, who, I am sorry to say, has been very unwell for some time past, joins me in our most sincere respects to yourself and your good lady, whom we have in grateful remembrance.

That your last days may be your best and happiest, is the wish of, &c. JOHN LANGDON.

TO ELBRIDGE GERRY.

Quincy, 28 January, 1813.

Vive la bagatelle! How shall we cure that distemper of the mind, State vanity? You know to what a degree the ancient dominion was infected with it, and how many sacrifices we have been obliged to make to it. You remember how Pennsylvania had it. Pennsylvania was "first in arts and arms!" Philadelphia was "the heart of the Union!" so said George Ross. Dr. Lyman Hall, of Georgia, readily acknowledged that she was the heart, because we know that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now, New York is to be placed at the head. Our poor old tame, good-natured pussy Massachusetts, who has the distemper in her heart deeper than any of them, has been obliged to turn and to flatter, to dissimulate and to simulate, in plain English, as Governor Hopkins once said, or rather was accused of saying, to coax, lie, and flatter in order to carry her points, and save herself from perdition. Her distemper, however, seems to be now rising, and approaching to the delirium of a fever. These are objects too great for my genius. I dare

not rise to greater things than ensigns, midshipmen, pursers, or deputy-quartermasters. My present topic is smaller than either.

Philadelphia is now boasting that Paul Jones has asserted in his journal that "his hand hoisted the first American flag!" And Captain Barry has asserted that "the first British flag was struck to him!"

Now, I assert that the first American flag was hoisted by John Manly, and the first British flag was struck to him. You were not in Congress in 1775, but you were in the State Congress, and must have known the history of Manly's capture of the transport which contained the mortar, which afterwards, on Dorchester heights, drove the English army from Boston, and navy from the harbor. I pray you, give me your recollections upon this subject. I wish to know the number of transports and merchant ships, and their names, captured by Manly or any of his associates, in 1775–6.

As your time and thoughts must be employed upon subjects of much greater moment, I hope you will not give yourself any trouble about this little thing. Your first recollections will be sufficient.

TO ELBRIDGE GERRY.

Quincy, 11 February, 1813

I am much obliged by your favor of the 9th, just received. Though I called the subject of my former letter a bagatelle, it is perhaps of some importance; for, as a navy is now an object, I think a circumstantial history of naval operations in this country ought to be written, even as far back as the province ship under Captain Hallowell, &c., and perhaps earlier still.

Looking into the journal of Congress for 1775, I find on Friday, September 22, 1775, Congress resolved that a committee be appointed to take into consideration the state of the trade of America.

Monday, September 25, 1775. Congress took into consideration the letters from General Washington, Nos. 5 and 6, and two others not numbered. Resolved, that a committee of three

be appointed to prepare an answer. Mr. Lynch, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Adams were chosen. But our accurate secretary has not stated whether it was Samuel or John Adams.

Thursday, October 5, 1775. Resolved, that a committee of three be appointed to prepare a plan for intercepting two vessels, which are on their way to Canada, laden with arms and powder; and that the committee proceed on this business immediately.

Our correct secretary has omitted the names of this committee; but if my memory has not created something out of nothing, this committee were Silas Deane, John Langdon, and John Adams. On the same day, the committee appointed to prepare a plan for intercepting the two vessels bound to Canada, brought in a report, which was taken into consideration.[1]

December 13th. Congress resolved, on the report of the committee, to build thirteen ships; five of thirty-two guns, five of twenty-eight, and three of twenty-four; and, December 12th, appointed a committee of thirteen, one from each State, to do the business. I was gone home, by leave of Congress; but I presume Barry and Jones were appointed by this committee.

General Heath, in his Memoirs, page 30, says, November 4th, (1775,) "the privateers fitted out by the Americans about this time, began to send in a few prizes." Page 31, November 30th, he says, "intelligence was received from Cape Ann, that a vessel from England, laden with warlike stores, had been taken and brought into that place. There were on board one thirteen-inch brass mortar, two thousand stand of arms, one hundred thousand flints, thirty-two tons of leaden ball, &c., &c. A fortunate capture for the Americans! December 2d, the brass thirteen-inch mortar, and sundry military stores taken in the ordnance prize, were brought to camp."

Pray, write to Captain John Selman, of Marblehead, and pray him to commit his recollections to writing. Broughton and Selman are important characters, and their ten prizes important events, as well as Governor Wright. Pray let me have the act and the preamble; curiosities they are. Who was Captain Burke and the other, Campbell and military stores, &c.? These

[1] The list of Acts and proceedings of Congress is omitted, as the same is found in the autobiography. Vol. iii. p. 8 – 10.

facts ought all to be ascertained. Heath was mistaken; privateering was not yet authorized by Congress or the State.

P. S. What might not Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island do, at this day, had they the patriotism of 1775?

TO JAMES MONROE.

Quincy, 23 February, 1813.

I thank you for your favor of the 15th, and the able report of the committee of foreign relations, and a very conciliatory bill for the regulation of seamen. I call it conciliatory, because in theory it should appear to be so, and because I believe it was sincerely intended to be so. The views were upright and the motives pure which produced it, I have no doubt. But will the present ministry in Great Britain receive it with equal candor? Will the parliament or the nation accept it? I believe not. My reasons for this opinion are too many to be enumerated in detail; but one or two may be suggested.

1. Equality, reciprocity, and indeed the right of an independent nation require that the imperial parliament of Great Britain should pass an act forbidding the employment of American seamen, not only in their royal navy, but in their merchant service. Will ministry, parliament, or nation consent to this? I think not, at least at present, nor for a long time to come. Why? Because, if they do, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, indeed all other nations will demand a similar law relative to their seamen.

2. It is only necessary to look in the Index of the British Statutes at large, to find a number of statutes offering and promising rewards, temptations, and allurements to foreign seamen of all nations to enter the service in the royal navy and the merchant ships too, and promising them by the faith of the nation all the rights and privileges of natural-born subjects. Will they repeal all these laws?

3. Will Great Britain stipulate to renounce the power of employing American seamen? On this subject I may be de-

ceived. And I desire to be understood to speak with diffidence. But I am suspicious, nay, persuaded, they have not only the impressed and enlisted American seamen on board their men-of-war to an amount of many thousands, but many more in their merchant ships and their transports. Among the documents attending one of their financial reports, was an article of four or five millions sterling for the pay of foreign seamen, in the merchant service, to the number of forty thousand. How came the government to pay seamen in the private service of merchants? I presume that foreign seamen have been employed not only in the transport service, but in forcing a clandestine commerce with the continent. And who were those foreign seamen? Nine tenths of them probably Americans.

The next question is, will this bill conciliate and unite the American people? It may put an argument into the mouths of some of the friends of the present administration, and take one away from some in the opposition; but it will not diminish the dread of taxes in the sordid, of whom the number is very great, nor extinguish the ambition to become the dominant party.

I hope you have by this time letters from Petersburg. We have only two since August. One containing nothing but a melancholy account of the death of the only daughter my son ever had. The other I will venture to inclose to you, in confidence, praying you to return it to me by the post. It is to his mother, and not intended to be seen by any but his family; but it contains more than usual of public affairs. We dare not correspond with him, nor he with us, upon public affairs. The times are too dangerous. Our letters have been almost all opened, many read by government in France and England; some produced in Court of Admiralty, yet all sent on at last. We have never lost but one letter. You may conclude from this that we have not offended High Mightinesses in France or England.

TO JOHN LATHROP.

Quincy, 22 March, 1813.

Reverend Sir, — I thank you for your kind letter of the 19th, and for the valuable present of your discourse, occasioned

by the death of Dr. Eliot. I had, indeed, "an acquaintance with the late Dr. Eliot," and with his father, and "an affection" for both.

I believe them both to have been "candid, pious, learned, sincere, and amiable," but I never had the felicity to belong to the same denomination in politics with either of them. Although I acknowledge much merit in the younger Dr. Eliot, in the labor and research discovered in his Biographical Dictionary, and its general utility, I must, nevertheless, own my regret for the numerous evidences of political prejudices. To such prejudices, however, I have found through the whole course of my life the very greatest and the very best men more or less liable.

I know nothing of the mediation, nor of the hopes of peace. I carefully avoid all secrets of government. Nothing has been presented to my mind, on which I can ground my hopes of a speedy peace. Your aspirations, my dear Doctor, after peace, are becoming your philosophical, moral, and Christian character. But you and I must remember that "sufferings become powerful means of checking the progress of folly and vice;" that "the miseries we feel or fear are the consequences of manifold abuses of Divine goodness."

Let me add an observation which your learning and experience must have made, because all ages and nations have attested to its truth; — that mankind, in general, and our beloved country, in particular, bear adversity much better than prosperity.

When I look back upon the period which has passed since you and I settled in Boston, in 1768, upon the lawyers, the physicians, and the merchants, who have departed, though I have made no exact enumeration, I cannot perceive that the number of divines is greater in proportion than in either of those professions. I see no reason, therefore, to surmise that the clergy have been distinguished from the laity in the important article of mortality. The moment cannot be distant, my excellent friend, when you and I must follow the multitude of our acquaintance, who have gone before us to a region where we shall meet the two Dr. Eliots, and other worthies of whatever nation, sect, or party, and smile at the little passions and smaller prejudices, which divide us in this region of wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, light and darkness, ignorance and knowledge,

where, however, the good predominates immensely over the evil, whatever in peevish moments we may think or say. I am, dear Sir, with high esteem and sincere respect, your friend.

TO WILLIAM PLUMER.

Quincy, 28 March, 1813.

You inquire, in your kind letter of the 19th, whether "every member of Congress did, on the 4th of July, 1776, in fact, cordially approve of the declaration of independence."

They who were then members, all signed it, and, as I could not see their hearts, it would be hard for me to say that they did not approve it; but, as far as I could penetrate the intricate, internal foldings of their souls, I then believed, and have not since altered my opinion, that there were several who signed with regret, and several others, with many doubts and much lukewarmness. The measure had been upon the carpet for months, and obstinately opposed from day to day. Majorities were constantly against it. For many days the majority depended on Mr. Hewes, of North Carolina. While a member, one day, was speaking, and reading documents from all the colonies, to prove that the public opinion, the general sense of all, was in favor of the measure, when he came to North Carolina, and produced letters and public proceedings which demonstrated that the majority of that colony were in favor of it, Mr. Hewes, who had hitherto constantly voted against it, started suddenly upright, and lifting up both his hands to Heaven, as if he had been in a trance, cried out, "It is done! and I will abide by it." I would give more for a perfect painting of the terror and horror upon the faces of the old majority, at that critical moment, than for the best piece of Raphael. The question, however, was eluded by an immediate motion for adjournment.

The struggle in Congress was long known abroad. Some members, who foresaw that the point would be carried, left the house and went home, to avoid voting in the affirmative or negative. Pennsylvania and New Jersey recalled all their delegates who had voted against independence, and sent new ones

expressly to vote for it. The last debate but one was the most copious and the most animated; but the question was now evaded by a motion to postpone it to another day; some members, however, declaring that, if the question should be now demanded, they should vote for it, but they wished for a day or two more to consider of it. When that day arrived, some of the new members desired to hear the arguments for and against the measure. When these were summarily recapitulated, the question was put and carried. There were no yeas and nays in those times. A committee was appointed to draw a declaration; when reported, it underwent abundance of criticism and alteration; but, when finally accepted, all those members who had voted against independence, now declared they would sign and support it.

The appointment of General Washington to the command, in 1775, of an army in Cambridge, consisting altogether of New England men, over the head of officers of their own flesh and choice, a most hazardous step, was another instance of apparent unanimity, and real regret in nearly one half. But this history is too long for this letter.

The taxes must be laid, and the war supported.

I have nothing from my son since 28th October. I know not how we shall ever get him home, though that is the most anxious wish of my heart. Pray write him as often as you can. I regret the change of hands in New Hampshire at this juncture very much.

TO ELBRIDGE GERRY.

Quincy, 14 April, 1813.

I have received your favors of the 8th and 10th, and the volume of Benjamin Edes's Gazettes, printed at Watertown between the 5th of June, 1775, and the 9th of December, 1776.

I am much obliged to you and to Mr. Austin for the loan of this precious collection of memorials.

I read last fall and winter The Scottish Chiefs, Thaddeus of Warsaw, and The Exiles of Siberia, and Scott's Lay, Marmion, and Lady, I must say, with much interest and amusement;

but this volume of gazettes, and the journals of Congress for the same period, which I have lately run over, have given me much more heartfelt delight. If these volumes appear to you as they do to me, how can we wonder at the total ignorance and oblivion of the revolution, which appears everywhere in the present generation? All the Boston orations on the 4th of July that I have ever read or heard, contain not so much of "the manners and feelings and principles which led to the revolution," as these two volumes of gazettes and journals.

The act printed in the Gazette of November 13th, 1775, "In the sixteenth year of the reign of George the Third, king, &c., an act for encouraging the fitting out of armed vessels to defend the sea-coast of America, and for erecting a court to try and condemn all vessels that shall be found infesting the same," is one of the most important documents in history.[1] The declaration of independence is a *brimborion* in comparison with it. Why may not the Chronicle or the Patriot reprint this law? Surely, this could be no libel. Neither editors nor printers need consult lawyers, to know whether Chief Justice Parsons could find any expression in it, to give in charge to a grand jury.

The best care shall be taken of this volume, and it shall be returned to Mr. Austin with thanks.

Commodore Williams's "record of our earliest privateers and prizes" will be received with gratitude; but I should be glad to see them in the Chronicle and Centinel. Had I not been in Congress at the time, and as anxious as Martha about many things, I should be ashamed to acknowledge that I am unacquainted with his person, character, and residence.

I can conceive of no possible objection against the publication of these things at this time, except that they do too much honor to Vice-President Gerry and to the memory of the late Governor Sullivan. "*Quorum pars magna fui*" might be assumed by them with more propriety than by your assured friend.

[1] This act was drawn by Mr. Gerry and Mr. Sullivan, for the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

TO BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE.

Quincy, 5 June, 1813.

I read, within a few days, an address to General and Governor Gage, from the bar, and the name of Caleb Strong among the addressers. This, to be sure, is a characteristic trait. In former parts of my life I have known somewhat of the thing called *a bar* — a significant word, and an important thing.

By all that I remember of the history of England, the British Constitution has been preserved by *the bar*. In all civil contests and political struggles, the lawyers have been divided; some have advocated the prerogatives of the crown, and some the rights of the people. All, or at least a majority, have united, at last, in restoring and improving the Constitution.

The principles, the characters, and the views of the American bar at this time are unknown or incomprehensible to me. What is the American bar? Who are the men? What are their names? Has their education been alike? Are their principles the same? Are Tucker and Story united in theory? I might proceed with my questions for half an hour. But, I will conclude with an anecdote. When Governor Hutchinson was about to leave his government and embark for England, a meeting of the bar was summoned in Boston. We met. A motion was made to "address the Governor upon his departure from the government of his native province. It was peculiarly proper for the bar, who had served under him as Chief Justice of the province, and witnessed his great abilities and integrity, to express publicly their high esteem of his character, and approbation of his conduct as Chief Justice, as Lieutenant-Governor, and as Governor."

No opposition was made, though father Dana, William Reed,[1] Samuel Swift, and Josiah Quincy, Junior, Esquires, were present. All was going on swimmingly. After some time, John Adams, whose destiny has always been to mount breaches and lead the forlorn hope, arose from his seat and modestly inquired

[1] The copy, which is quite defective, says *John* in one place and *Joseph* in the other, but John had been dead many years. Of William Reed, the only one of the name at the bar at this time, Mr. Washburn confesses his inability to gain any information. *Judicial History of Massachusetts.*

whether the proposed address was to be presented to the Governor, and go to the public, as the address of the bar as a body, to be signed by their president or secretary, or whether it was to be signed and presented as the act of individuals. The answer from all quarters was, "by the bar as a body, to be sure." John Adams then said, it would be unfair to send out to the world an address, as an act of the whole bar, when some of them could not approve it. He had no desire to control any man in the expression of his sentiments, but was not willing to have his own suppressed. He had no objection to an address to be drawn, signed, and presented by those gentlemen who should approve it; but the bar was not a legal corporation, and had no public authority. The minority, therefore, however small, could not be controlled, and ought not to be restrained from expressing their opinions; and ought not to be involved in a general vote. This ought to have been sufficient, but it was not. Still the cry was, "the bar!" The address must be from the bar!

Poor John was obliged, at last, to rise once more and say, "To be sure, it is in the power of the majority to vote, and to address, and to present and publish their addresses as the act of the bar; but it was not in their power to prevent the minority from publishing their dissent. He knew not whether he should be joined or countenanced by any other; but he would attend, and when the address should be discussed, he would give his opinions and his reasons, and, if an address was finally adopted by the bar, as a bar, in which any thing should be inserted to which he could not agree, he would enter his protest against it, in writing, and assign his reasons. Whether any other gentlemen would join him, he knew not. But, if not, he would stand alone." Josiah Quincy, Junior, Esquire, and Samuel Swift, Esquire, as if appalled and astonished, sat mute. John Lowell, Esquire, said, in a kind of hurry, "*This declaration does great honor to Mr. Adams.*" Daniel Leonard, Esquire, said: "*If there is to be a protest, and reasons assigned, and all this to be published, the whole design will be defeated, and it would be better to have no address at all.*"

John Adams then said, "he neither approved the administration of Mr. Hutchinson as Lieutenant-Governor, as Chief Justice, nor as Governor, and he would not suffer his opinion to be

equivocal." Your knowledge of human nature is deep enough to infer the character of Lowell, Leonard, and Quincy, from what they said or what they said not. The plan of an address from the bar, as a body, was laid aside.

Had John Adams been compelled to produce his protest, Richard Dana, William Reed, Samuel Swift, Benjamin Kent, and Josiah Quincy, Junior, would have signed it. Auchmuty, Sewall, Fitch, Samuel Quincy, Ben. Gridley, Blowers, Cazneau, &c., &c., would have been against them.[1]

You have, and ought to have, a tenderness for the memories of Hutchinson and Olivers. So have I, more than you suspect. Yet you must know the truth, and nothing but the truth, from

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 10 June, 1813.

In your letter to Dr. Priestley, of March 21st, 1801, you ask, "What an effort of bigotry in politics and religion have we gone through! The barbarians really flattered themselves they should be able to bring back the times of vandalism, when ignorance put every thing into the hands of power and priestcraft. All advances in science were proscribed as innovations. They pretended to praise and encourage education, but it was to be the education of our ancestors; we were to look backward, not forward, for improvement, *the President himself* declaring, in one of his answers to addresses, that we were never to expect to go beyond them in real science." I shall stop here. Other parts of this letter may hereafter be considered, if I can keep the book long enough; but only four copies have arrived in Boston, and they have spread terror; as yet, however, in secret.[2]

"The President himself declaring that we were never to ex-

[1] Hutchinson speaks of the address, which was actually presented, as having been signed by "the gentlemen of the law, with three or four exceptions only." None of the names of the persons placed in the first category are found attached to it. All those included in the second signed it.

[2] This letter had just appeared at this time in the appendix to Belsham's *Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey*. It is included in Mr. Randolph's edition of Jefferson's *Writings*, vol. iii. p. 461.

pect to go beyond them in real science." This sentence shall be the theme of my present letter. I would ask what President is meant. I remember no such sentiment in any of Washington's answers to addresses. I myself must have been meant. Now, I have no recollection of any such sentiment ever issuing from my pen or my tongue, or of any such thought in my heart for at least sixty years of my past life. I should be obliged to you for the words of any answer of mine that you have thus misunderstood.

A man of seventy-seven or seventy-eight cannot commonly be expected to recollect promptly every passage of his past life, or every trifle he has written. Much less can it be expected of me to recollect every expression of every answer to an address, when, for six months together, I was compelled to answer addresses of all sorts, from all quarters of the Union. My private secretary has declared that he has copied fifteen answers from me in one morning. The greatest affliction, distress, confusion of my administration arose from the necessity of receiving and answering these addresses. Richard Cromwell's trunk did not contain so many of the lives and fortunes of the English nation as mine of those in the United States. For the honor of my country I wish these addresses and answers were annihilated. For my own character and reputation, I wish every word of every address and every answer were published.

The sentiment that you have attributed to me in your letter to Dr. Priestley, I totally disclaim, and demand, in the French sense of the word, of you the proof. It is totally incongruous to every principle of my mind and every sentiment of my heart for three score years at least.

You may expect many more expostulations from one who has loved and esteemed you for eight-and-thirty years.

When this letter was ready to go, your favor of May 27th came to hand.[1] I can only thank you for it at present.

[1] Published by Randolph, vol. iv. p. 191.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 14 June, 1813.

In your letter to Dr. Priestley, of March 21st, 1801, you "tender to him the protection of those laws which were made for the wise and good like him, and disclaim the legitimacy of that libel on legislation, which, under the form of a law, was, for some time, placed among them." This law, I presume, was the alien law, as it was called.

As your name is subscribed to that law, as Vice-President, and mine as President, I know not why you are not as responsible for it as I am. Neither of us was concerned in the formation of it. We were then at war with France. French spies then swarmed in our cities and our country; some of them were intolerably impudent, turbulent, and seditious. To check these, was the design of this law. Was there ever a government which had not authority to defend itself against spies in its own bosom — spies of an enemy at war? This law was never executed by me in any instance.

But what is the conduct of our government now? Aliens are ordered to report their names, and obtain certificates once a month; and an industrious Scotchman, at this moment industriously laboring in my garden, is obliged to walk once a month to Boston, eight miles at least, to renew his certificate from the marshal. And a fat organist is ordered into the country, &c. All this is right. Every government has, by the law of nations, a right to make prisoners of war of every subject of an enemy. But a war with England differs not from a war with France. The law of nations is the same in both.

I cannot write volumes on a single sheet, but these letters of yours require volumes from me.

"The mighty wave of public opinion, which has rolled over!" This is in your style; and, sometimes, in mine, with less precision and less delicacy. O, Mr. Jefferson! what a wave of public opinion has rolled over the universe! By the universe here, I mean our globe. I can yet say, "there is nothing new under the sun" in my sense. The reformation rolled a wave of public opinion over the globe, as wonderful as this. A war of thirty years was necessary to compose this wave. The wars of Char-

lemagne rolled a wave. The Crusades rolled a wave more mountainous than the French revolution. Only one hundred years ago, a wave was rolled, when Austria, England, and Holland, in alliance, contended against France for the dominion, or rather, the alliance of Spain.

Had "the clock run down," I am not so sanguine as you that the consequence would have been as you presume. I was determined, in all events, to retire. You and Mr. Madison are indebted to Bayard for an evasion of the contest. Had the voters for Burr addressed the nation, I am not sure that your convention would have decided in your favor.[1] But what reflections does this suggest! What pretensions had Aaron Burr to be President or Vice-President?

What "a wave" has rolled over christendom for fifteen hundred years! What a wave has rolled over France for fifteen hundred years, supporting in power and glory the dynasty of Bourbon! What a wave supported the house of Austria! What a wave has supported the dynasty of Mahomet for twelve hundred years! What a wave supported the house of Hercules for so many ages in more remote antiquity! These waves are not to be slighted. They are less resistible than those in the gulf stream in a hurricane. What a wave has the French revolution spread! And what a wave is our navy of five frigates raising!

If I can keep this book, "Memoirs of Lindsey," I shall have more to say. Meantime,

I remain, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 28 June, 1813.

It is very true that the denunciations of the priesthood are fulminated against every advocate for a complete freedom of religion. Comminations, I believe, would be plenteously pronounced by even the most liberal of them, against atheism,

[1] "A convention, invited by the republican members of Congress with the virtual President and Vice-President, would have been on the ground in eight weeks, would have repaired the Constitution where it was defective, and wound it up again." *Jefferson to Priestley.*

deism, — against every man who disbelieved or doubted the resurrection of Jesus, or the miracles of the New Testament. Priestley himself would denounce the man who should deny the Apocalypse, or the prophecies of Daniel. Priestley and Lindsey have both denounced as idolaters and blasphemers all the Trinitarians and even the Arians. Poor weak man! when will thy perfection arrive? Thy perfectibility I shall not deny, for a greater character than Priestley or Godwin has said, "Be ye perfect," &c. For my part, I cannot "deal damnation round the land" on all I judge the foes of God or man. But I did not intend to say a word on this subject in this letter. As much of it as you please, hereafter; but let me now return to politics.

With some difficulty I have hunted up or down the "address of the young men of the city of Philadelphia, the district of Southwark, and the northern liberties," and the answer.

The addressers say, "actuated by the *same principles* on which our forefathers achieved their independence, the recent attempts of a foreign power to derogate from the rights and dignity of our country, awaken our liveliest sensibility and our strongest indignation." Huzza, my brave boys! Could Thomas Jefferson or John Adams hear these words with insensibility and without emotion? These boys afterwards add, "we regard our liberty and independence as the richest portion given us by our ancestors." And who were these ancestors? Among them were Thomas Jefferson and John Adams; and I very coolly believe that no two men among these ancestors did more towards it than those two. Could either hear this like a statue? If, one hundred years hence, your letters and mine should see the light, I hope the reader will hunt up this address, and read it all, and remember that we were then engaged, or on the point of engaging, in a war with France. I shall not repeat the answer till we come to the paragraph upon which you criticized to Dr. Priestley, though every word of it is true; and I now rejoice to see it recorded, though I had wholly forgotten it.

The paragraph is, "Science and morals are the great pillars on which this country has been raised to its present population, opulence, and prosperity; and these alone can advance, support, and preserve it. Without wishing to damp the ardor of curiosity, or influence the freedom of inquiry, I will hazard a predic-

tion, that after the most industrious and impartial researches, the longest liver of you all will find no principles, institutions, or systems of education more fit, *in general*, to be transmitted to your posterity than those you have received from your ancestors." [1]

Now, compare the paragraph in the answer with the paragraph in the address, as both are quoted above, and see if we can find the extent and the limits of the meaning of both.

Who composed that army of fine young fellows that was then before my eyes? There were among them Roman Catholics, English Episcopalians, Scotch and American Presbyterians, Methodists, Moravians, Anabaptists, German Lutherans, German Calvinists, Universalists, Arians, Priestleyans, Socinians, Independents, Congregationalists, Horse Protestants, and House Protestants,[2] Deists and Atheists, and Protestants "*qui ne croyent rien.*" Very few, however, of several of these species; nevertheless, all educated in the *general principles* of Christianity, and the general principles of English and American liberty.

Could my answer be understood by any candid reader or hearer, to recommend to all the others the general principles, institutions, or systems of education of the Roman Catholics, or those of the Quakers, or those of the Presbyterians, or those of the Methodists, or those of the Moravians, or those of the Universalists, or those of the Philosophers? No. The *general principles* on which the fathers achieved independence, were the only principles in which that beautiful assembly of young men could unite, and these principles only could be intended by them in their address, or by me in my answer. And what were these *general principles?* I answer, the general principles of Christianity, in which all those sects were united, and the *general principles* of English and American liberty, in which all those young men united, and which had united all parties in America, in majorities sufficient to assert and maintain her independence. Now I will avow, that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God; and

[1] For the whole of the answer, of which this is a part, see vol. ix. p. 188.

[2] All the later letters of Mr. Adams are much marred in the copying. Unless these words refer to Messrs. Horne and Howes, two of the disputants with Dr. Priestley in England, the editor cannot explain them.

that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature and our terrestrial, mundane system. I could, therefore, safely say, consistently with all my then and present information, that I believed they would never make discoveries in contradiction to these *general principles*. In favor of these *general principles*, in philosophy, religion, and government, I could fill sheets of quotations from Frederic of Prussia, from Hume, Gibbon, Bolingbroke, Rousseau, and Voltaire, as well as Newton and Locke; not to mention thousands of divines and philosophers of inferior fame.

I might have flattered myself that my sentiments were sufficiently known to have protected me against suspicions of narrow thoughts, contracted sentiments, bigoted, enthusiastic, or superstitious principles, civil, political, philosophical, or ecclesiastical. The first sentence of the preface to my Defence of the Constitution, vol. i., printed in 1787, is in these words: "The arts and sciences, in general, during the three or four last centuries, have had a regular course of progressive improvement. The inventions in mechanic arts, the discoveries in natural philosophy, navigation, and commerce, and the advancement of civilization and humanity, have occasioned changes in the condition of the world, and the human character, which would have astonished the most refined nations of antiquity," &c. I will quote no farther, but request you to read again that whole page, and then say whether the writer of it could be suspected of recommending to youth "to look backward instead of forward," for instruction and improvement. This letter is already too long. In my next, I shall consider "the terrorism of the day."

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 30 June, 1813.

Before I proceed to the order of the day, which is "the terrorism of a former day," I beg leave to correct an idea that some readers may infer from an expression in one of your letters. No sentiment or expression in any of my answers to addresses was obtruded or insinuated by any person about me. Every

one of them was written with my own hand. I alone am responsible for all the mistakes and errors in them. To have called council to deliberate on such a mass of —— would have taken all the time, and the business of the State have been suspended. It is true, I was sufficiently plagued by P's and T's, and S's. These, however, were puppets danced upon the wires of two jugglers behind the scene; and these jugglers were Hamilton and Washington. How you stare at the name of Washington! But to return, *for the present*, to "the sensations excited in free yet firm minds by the terrorism of the day." You say, "none can conceive them who did not witness them, and they were felt by one party only." [1]

/Upon this subject I despair of making myself understood by posterity, by the present age, and even by you. To collect and arrange the documents illustrative of it, would require as many lives as a cat. You never felt the terrorism of Shays's rebellion in Massachusetts. I believe you never felt the terrorism of Mr. Gallatin's insurrection in Pennsylvania. You certainly never realized the terrorism of Fries's most outrageous riot and rescue, as I call it, — treason, rebellion, as the world and great judges and two juries pronounced it. You certainly never felt the terrorism excited by Genet, in 1793, when ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, threatened to drag Washington out of his house, and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French revolution and against England. The coolest and the firmest minds, even among the Quakers in Philadelphia, have given their opinions to me, that nothing but the yellow fever, which removed Dr. Hutchinson and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant from this world, could have saved the United States from a fatal revolution of government. I have no doubt you were fast asleep, in philosophical tranquillity, when ten thousand people, and, perhaps, many more, were parading the streets of Philadelphia on the evening of my Fast Day; when even Governor Mifflin himself thought it his duty to order a patrol of horse and foot to preserve the peace; when Market street was as full as men could stand by one another, and, even before my door; when some of my domestics, in frenzy, determined to sacrifice

[1] See the whole letter of Mr. Jefferson in Mr. Randolph's collection, vol. iv. p. 193.

their lives in my defence; when all were ready to make a desperate sally among the multitude, and others were, with difficulty and danger, dragged back by the rest; when I, myself, judged it prudent and necessary to order chests of arms from the war-office to be brought through by-lanes and back-doors, determined to defend my house at the expense of my life and the lives of the few, very few domestics and friends within it. What think you of terrorism, Mr. Jefferson? I shall investigate the causes, the motives, the incentives to these terrorisms. Shall I remind you of Philip Freneau, of Lloyd, of Ned Church, of Peter Markoe, of Andrew Brown, of Duane, of Callender, of Tom Paine, of Greenleaf, of Cheetham, of Jennison at New York, of Benjamin Austin at Boston? But, above all, shall I request you to collect the circular letters from members of Congress, in the middle and southern States, to their constituents? I would give all I am worth for a complete collection of those letters. Please to recollect Edward Livingston's motions and speeches, and those of his associates, in the case of Jonathan Robbins.

The real terrors of both parties have always been, and now are, the fear that they shall lose the elections, and, consequently, the loaves and fishes, and that their antagonists will get them. Both parties have excited artificial terrorism, and, if I were summoned as a witness to say, upon oath, which party had excited[1] the most terror, and which had really felt the most, I could not give a more sincere answer than in the vulgar style, "put them in a bag and shake them, and then see which will come out first."

Where is the terrorism now, my friend? There is now more real terrorism in New England than there ever was in Virginia, the terror of a civil war *à la Vendée*, a division of the States, &c., &c., &c. How shall we conjure down this damnable rivalry between Virginia and Massachusetts? Virginia had recourse to Pennsylvania and New York. Massachusetts has now recourse to New York. They have almost got New Jersey and Maryland, and they are aiming at Pennsylvania. And all this in the midst of a war with England, when all Europe is in flames!

[1] One or two words not legible in the copy.

I will give you a hint or two more on the subject of terrorism. When John Randolph, in the House, and Stephens Thompson Mason, in the Senate, were treating me with the utmost contempt; when Ned Livingston was threatening me with impeachment for the murder of Jonathan Robbins, *the native of Danvers in Connecticut;* when I had certain information that the daily language in the insurance office in Boston was, even from the mouth of Charles Jarvis, "We must go to Philadelphia and drag that John Adams from his chair," I thank God that terror never seized on my mind. But I have had more excitements to it, from 1761 to this day, than any other man. Name the other, if you can. I have been disgraced and degraded, and I have a right to complain. But, as I have always expected it, I have always submitted to it, perhaps with too much tameness.

The amount of all the speeches of John Randolph, in the House, for two or three years, is that himself and myself are the only two honest and consistent men in the United States; himself eternally in opposition to government, and myself as constantly in favor of it. He is now in correspondence with his friend Quincy. What will come of it, let Virginia and Massachusetts judge. In my next, you may find something upon correspondences, whig and tory, federal and democratic, Virginian and Novanglian, English and French, Jacobin and despotic. Meantime, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 9 July, 1813.

Lord! Lord! what can I do with so much Greek? When I was of your age, young man, that is, seven or eight years ago, I felt a kind of pang of affection for one of the flames of my youth, and again paid my addresses to Isocrates and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, &c., &c., &c. I collected all my lexicons and grammars, and sat down to Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων. In this way I amused myself for some time, but I found that if I looked a word to-day, in less than a week I had to look it again. It

was to little better purpose than writing letters on a pail of water.

Whenever I sit down to write to you, I am precisely in the situation of the wood-cutter on Mount Ida. I cannot see wood for trees. So many subjects crowd upon me, that I know not which to begin. But I will begin at random with Belsham, who is, I have no doubt, a man of merit. He had no malice against you, nor any thought of doing mischief; nor has he done any, though he has been imprudent. The truth is, the dissenters of all denominations in England, and, especially, the Unitarians, are cowed, as we used to say at college. They are ridiculed, insulted, persecuted. They can scarcely hold their heads above water. They catch at straws and shadows to avoid drowning. Priestley sent your letter to Lindsey, and Belsham printed it from the same motive, i. e. to derive some countenance from the name of Jefferson. Nor has it done harm here. Priestley says to Lindsey, "You see he is almost one of us, and he hopes will soon be altogether such as we are." Even in our New England I have heard a high federal divine say, your letters had increased his respect for you.

"The same political parties, which now agitate the United States, have existed through all time." Precisely; and this is precisely the complaint in the preface to the first volume of my Defence. While all other sciences have advanced, that of government is at a stand; little better understood, little better practised now than three or four thousand years ago. What is the reason? I say, parties and factions will not suffer improvements to be made. As soon as one man hints at an improvement, his rival opposes it. No sooner has one party discovered or invented any amelioration of the condition of man, or the order of society than the opposite party belies it, misconstrues it, misrepresents it, ridicules it, insults it, and persecutes it. Records are destroyed. Histories are annihilated or interpolated or prohibited; sometimes by Popes, sometimes by Emperors, sometimes by aristocratical, and sometimes by democratical assemblies, and sometimes by mobs.

Aristotle wrote the history and description of eighteen hundred republics which existed before his time. Cicero wrote two volumes of discourses on government, which, perhaps, were worth all the rest of his works. The works of Livy and Taci-

tus, &c., that are lost, would be more interesting than all that remain. Fifty gospels have been destroyed. Where are St. Luke's world of books that were written?

If you ask my opinion, who has committed all the havoc? I will answer you candidly. Ecclesiastical and imperial despotisms have done it to conceal their frauds.

Why are the histories of all nations, more ancient than the Christian era, lost? Who destroyed the Alexandrian library? I believe that Christian priests, Jewish rabbis, Grecian sages, and Roman emperors, had as great a hand in it as Turks and Mahometans. Democrats, rebels, and Jacobins, when they possess a momentary power, have shown a disposition both to destroy and to forge records, as Vandatical as priests and despots. Such has been and such is the world we live in.

I recollect, near thirty years ago, to have said carelessly to you, that I wished I could find time and means to write something upon aristocracy. You seized upon the idea, and encouraged me to do it with all that friendly warmth that is natural and habitual to you. I soon began, and have been writing upon that subject ever since. I have been so unfortunate as never to be able to make myself understood. Your ἄριστοι are the most difficult animals to manage of any thing in the whole theory and practice of government. They will not suffer themselves to be governed. They not only exert all their own subtilty, industry, and courage, but they employ the commonalty to knock to pieces every plan and model that the most honest architects in legislation can invent to keep them within bounds. Both patricians and plebeians are as furious as the workmen in England to demolish labor-saving machinery.

But who are these ἄριστοι? Who shall judge? Who shall select these choice spirits from the rest of the congregation? Themselves? We must find out and determine who themselves are. Shall the congregation choose? Ask Xenophon. Perhaps, hereafter I may quote you Greek; too much in a hurry at present; English must suffice. Xenophon says, that the ecclesia always choose the worst men they can find, because none others will do their dirty work. This wicked motive is worse than birth or wealth. Here I want to quote Greek again, but the day before I received your letter of June 27th, I gave the book to George Washington Adams, going to the academy

at Hingham. The title is, ΗΘΙΚΗ ΠΟΙΗΣΙΣ, a collection of moral sentences from all the most ancient Greek poets. In one of the oldest of them I read, in Greek that I cannot repeat, a couplet, the sense of which was: "Nobility in men is worth as much as it is in horses, asses, or rams; but the meanest-blooded puppy in the world, if he gets a little money, is as good a man as the best of them." Yet birth and wealth together have prevailed over virtue and talents in all ages. The many will acknowledge no other ἀριστοι. Your experience of this truth will not much differ from that of your old friend.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy. 13 July, 1813.

Let me allude to one circumstance more, in one of your letters to me, before I touch upon the subject of religion in your letter to Priestley. The first time that you and I differed in opinion on any material question was after your arrival from Europe; and that point was the French revolution. You was well persuaded in your own mind that the nation would succeed in establishing a free republican government. I was well persuaded in mine, that a project of such a government, over five-and-twenty millions of people, when four-and-twenty millions and five hundred thousand of them could neither read nor write, was as unnatural, irrational, and impracticable as it would be over the elephants, lions, tigers, panthers, wolves, and bears, in the royal menagerie at Versailles. Napoleon has lately invented a word, which perfectly expressed my opinion at that time and ever since. He calls the project *ideology;* and John Randolph, though he was, fourteen years ago, as wild an enthusiast for equality and fraternity as any of them, appears to be now a regenerated proselyte to Napoleon's opinion and mine, that it was all madness.

The Greeks, in their allegorical style, said that the two ladies, ἀριστοκρατια and δημοκρατία, always in a quarrel, disturbed every body in the neighborhood with their brawls. It is a fine observation of yours that whig and tory belong to natural history.

Inequalities of mind and body are so established by God Almighty in his constitution of human nature, that no art or policy can ever plane them down to a level. I have never read reasoning more absurd, sophistry more gross, in proof of the Athanasian creed, or transubstantiation, than the subtle labors of Helvetius and Rousseau to demonstrate the natural equality of mankind. *Jus cuique*, the golden rule, do as you would be done by, is all the equality that can be supported or defended by reason or common sense.

It is very true, as you justly observe, I can say nothing new on this or any other subject of government. But when Lafayette harangued you, and me, and John Quincy Adams, through a whole evening, in your hotel in the *Cul de Sac*, at Paris, and developed the plans now in operation to reform France, though I was silent as you was, I then thought I could say something new to him. In plain truth, I was astonished at the grossness of his ignorance of government and history, as I had been for years before, at that of Turgot, Rochefoucauld, Condorcet, and Franklin. This gross ideology of them all first suggested to me the thought and the inclination, which I afterwards executed in London, of writing something upon aristocracy. I was restrained for years by many fearful considerations. Who and what was I? Why, a man of no name or consideration in Europe. The manual exercise of writing was painful and distressing to me, almost like a blow on the elbow or the knee; my style was habitually negligent, unstudied, unpolished; I should make enemies of all the French patriots, the Dutch patriots, the English republicans, dissenters, reformers, call them what you will; and, what came nearer home to my bosom than all the rest, I knew I should give offence to many, if not all, of my best friends in America, and, very probably, destroy all the little popularity I ever had in a country where popularity had more omnipotence than the British parliament assumed. Where should I get the necessary books? What printer or bookseller would undertake to print such hazardous writings? But, when the French assembly of notables met, and I saw that Turgot's "government in one centre, and that centre the nation," a sentence as mysterious or as contradictory as the Athanasian creed, was about to take place; and when I saw that Shays's rebellion was breaking out in Massachusetts; and when I saw that

even my obscure name was often quoted in France as an advocate for simple democracy; when I saw that the sympathies in America had caught the French flame, I was determined to wash my own hands as clear as I could of all this foulness. I had then strong forebodings that I was sacrificing all the emoluments of this life; and so it has happened, but not in so great a degree as I apprehended.

In truth, my "Defence of the Constitutions" and "Discourses on Davila," were the cause of that immense unpopularity which fell like the tower of Siloam upon me. Your steady defence of democratical principles, and your invariable favorable opinion of the French revolution, laid the foundation of your unbounded popularity. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Now, I will forfeit my life, if you can find one sentiment in my Defence of the Constitutions, or the Discourses on Davila, which, by a fair construction, can favor the introduction of hereditary monarchy or aristocracy into America. They were all written to support and strengthen the Constitution of the United States.

The wood-cutter on Mount Ida, though he was puzzled to find a tree to drop at first, I presume knew how to leave off when he was weary. But I never know when to cease when I begin to write to you.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 17 July, 1813.

Your letters to Priestley have increased my grief, if that were possible, for the loss of Rush. Had he lived, I would have stimulated him to insist on your promise to him to write him on the subject of religion. Your plan I admire.

In your letter to Priestley, of March 21st, 1801, dated at Washington, you call the Christian philosophy "the most sublime and benevolent, but most perverted system, that ever shone on man." That it is the most sublime and benevolent, I agree; but whether it has been more perverted than that of Moses, of Confucius, of Zoroaster, of Sanchoniathon, of Numa, of Mahomet, of the Druids, of the Hindoos, &c., &c., &c., I can-

not as yet determine, because I am not sufficiently acquainted with these systems, or the history of their effects, to form a decisive opinion of the result of the comparison.

In your letter, dated Washington, April 9th, 1803, you say, "in consequence of some conversation with Dr. Rush, in the years 1798–99, I had promised him, some day, to write him a letter, giving him my view of the Christian system. I have reflected upon it since, and even sketched the outlines in my own mind. I should first take a general view of the moral doctrines of the most remarkable of the ancient philosophers, of whose ethics we have sufficient information to make an estimate, say of Pythagoras, Epicurus, Epictetus, Socrates, Cicero, Seneca, Antoninus. I should do justice to the branches of morality they have treated well, but point out the importance of those in which they are deficient. I should then take a view of the deism and ethics of the Jews, and show in what a degraded state they were, and the necessity they presented of a reformation. I should proceed to a view of the life, character, and doctrines of Jesus, who, sensible of the incorrectness of their ideas of the Deity and of morality, endeavored to bring them to the principles of a pure deism, and juster notions of the attributes of God, to reform their moral doctrines to the standard of reason, justice, and philanthropy, and to inculcate a belief in a future state. This view would purposely omit the question of his divinity, and even his inspiration. To do him justice, it would be necessary to remark the disadvantages his doctrines have to encounter, not having been committed to writing by himself, but by the most unlettered of men, by memory, long after they had heard them from him, when much was forgotten, much misunderstood, and presented in very paradoxical shapes. Yet such are the fragments remaining as to show a master-workman, and that his system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime, probably, that has ever been taught, and more perfect than any of the ancient philosophers. His character and doctrines have received still greater injury from those who pretend to be his special disciples, and who have disfigured and sophisticated his actions and precepts from views of personal interest, so as to induce the unthinking part of mankind to throw off the whole system in disgust, and to pass sentence as an impostor on the most innocent, the most

benevolent, the most eloquent and sublime character that has ever been exhibited to man. This is the outline!"

"*Sancte Socrate! Ora pro nobis!*" Erasmus. Priestley, in his letter to Lindsey, inclosing a copy of your letter to him, says, "he is generally considered as an unbeliever. If so, however, he cannot be far from us, and I hope in the way to be not only almost, but altogether what we are. He now attends public worship very regularly, and his moral conduct was never impeached."

Now, I see not but you are as good a Christian as Priestley and Lindsey. Piety and morality were the end and object of the Christian system, according to them and according to you. They believed in the resurrection of Jesus, in his miracles and inspirations. But what inspirations? Not all that is recorded in the New Testament or the Old. They have not yet told us how much they believe or disbelieve. They have not told us how much allegory, how much parable they find, nor how they explained them all in the New Testament or Old.

John Quincy Adams has written, for years, to his sons, boys of ten and twelve, a series of letters, in which he pursues a plan more extensive than yours, but agreeing in most of the essential points. I wish these letters could be preserved in the bosoms of his boys. But women and priests will get them; and I expect, if he makes a peace, he will have to retire, like Jay, to study prophecies to the end of his life.

I have more to say upon this subject of religion.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 18 July, 1813.

I have more to say on religion. For more than sixty years I have been attentive to this great subject. Controversies between Calvinists and Arminians, Trinitarians and Unitarians, Deists and Christians, Atheists and both, have attracted my attention, whenever the singular life I have led would admit, to all these questions. The history of this little village of Quincy, if it were worth recording, would explain to you how this hap-

pened. I think I can now say I have read away bigotry, if not enthusiasm.

What does Priestley mean by an unbeliever, when he applies it to you? How much did he unbelieve himself? Gibbon had him right when he denominated his creed "scanty." We are to understand, no doubt, that he believed the resurrection of Jesus, some of his miracles, his inspiration; but in what degree? He did not believe in the inspiration of the writings that contain his history. Yet he believed in the Apocalyptic beast, and he believed as much as he pleased in the writings of Daniel and John. This great and extraordinary man, whom I sincerely loved, esteemed, and respected, was really a phenomenon; a comet in the system, like Voltaire, Bolingbroke, and Hume. Had Bolingbroke or Voltaire taken him in hand, what would they have made of him and his creed?

I do not believe you have read much of Priestley's "Corruptions of Christianity," his History of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ, his predestination, his no soul system, or his controversy with Horsley. I have been a diligent student for many years in books whose titles you have never seen. In Priestley's and Lindsey's writings, in Farmer, Cappe, in Tucker, or Edward Search's Light of Nature Pursued, in Edwards and Hopkins, and, lately, in Ezra Stiles Ely, his reverend and learned panegyrists, and his elegant and spirited opponents. I am not wholly uninformed of the controversies in Germany, and the learned researches of universities and professors, in which the sanctity of the Bible and the inspiration of its authors are taken for granted or waved, or admitted or not denied. I have also read Condorcet's Progress of the Human Mind. Now, what is all this to you? No more than if I should tell you that I read Dr. Clarke, and Dr. Waterland, and Emlyn, and Leland's View or Review of the Deistical writers, more than fifty years ago, which is a literal truth.

I blame you not for reading Euclid and Newton, Thucydides and Theocritus, for I believe you will find as much entertainment and instruction in them as I have found in my theological and ecclesiastical instructors, or even, as I have found, in a profound investigation of the life, writings, and doctrines of Erastus, whose disciples were Milton, Harrington, Selden, St. John, the Chief Justice, father of Bolingbroke, and others, the

choicest spirits of their age; or in La Harpe's history of the philosophy of the eighteenth century; or in Vanderkemp's vast map of the causes of the revolutionary spirit, in the same and preceding centuries. These things are to me the marbles and nine-pins of old age; I will not say the beads and prayer-books. I agree with you as far as you go, most cordially, and, I think, solidly. How much farther I go, how much more I believe than you, I may explain in a future letter. Thus much I will say at present. I have found so many difficulties that I am not astonished at your stopping where you are; and, so far from sentencing you to perdition, I hope soon to meet you in another country.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, August, 1813.

Κριοὺς μὲν καὶ ὄνους διζήμεθα, Κύρνε, καὶ ἵππους
Εὐγενέας, καί τις βούλεται ἐξ ἀγαθῶν
Κτήσασθαι· γῆμαι δὲ κακὴν κακοῦ οὐ μελεδαίνει
Ἐσθλός ἀνὴρ, ἢν οἱ χρήματα πολλὰ διδῷ.

Behold my translation!

"My friend Curnis, when we want to purchase horses, asses, or rams, we inquire for the well-born, and every one wishes to procure from the good breeds. A good man does not care to marry a shrew, the daughter of a shrew, unless they give a great deal of money with her." [1]

What think you of my translation? Compare it with that of Grotius, and tell me which is the nearest to the original in letter and in spirit.

Grotius renders it, —

Nobilitas asinis et equis simul, arietibusque
Dat pretium: nec de semine degeneri
Admissura placet. Sed pravæ e sanguine pravo,
Si dos sit, præsto est optima conditio.

[1] "The expressions *good* and *bad* men, which in later times bore a purely moral signification, are evidently used by Theognis in a political sense for nobles and commons." Müller, *Literature of Ancient Greece.*

This flower of Greek poetry is extracted from the

ΘΕΟΓΝΙΔΟΣ ΜΕΓΑΡΕΩΣ ΠΑΡΑΙΝΕΣΕΙΣ.

Theognis lived five hundred and forty-four years before Jesus Christ. Has science, or morals, or philosophy, or criticism, or Christianity, advanced, or improved, or enlightened mankind upon this subject, and shown them that the idea of the "well-born" is a prejudice, a phantom, a point-no-point, a Cape Fly-away, a dream?

I say it is the ordinance of God Almighty, in the constitution of human nature, and wrought into the fabric of the universe. Philosophers and politicians may nibble and quibble, but they never will get rid of it. Their only resource is to control it. Wealth is another monster to be subdued. Hercules could not subdue both or either. To subdue them by regular approaches and strong fortifications, by a regular siege, was not my object in writing on aristocracy, as I proposed to you in Grosvenor-Square. If you deny any one of these positions, I will prove them to demonstration by examples drawn from your own Virginia, and from every other State in the Union, and from the history of every nation, civilized and savage, from all we know of the time of the creation of the world.

Whence is the derivation of the words *generous*, *generously*, *generosity*, &c.? Johnson says, "Generous — *a generosus*, Latin, not of mean birth; of good extraction; noble of mind; magnanimous; open of heart; liberal; munificent, strong, vigorous," and he might have added, courageous, heroic, patriotic.

Littleton happens to be at hand. "*Generosus* — *εὐγενὴς, γενναῖος. Nobilis; ex præclaro genere ortus; qui a genere non deflectit.* Born of a noble race, a gentleman born." See his examples.

What is the origin of the word *gentleman?*

It would be a curious critical speculation for a learned idler to pursue this idea through all languages.

We may call this sentiment a prejudice, because we can give what names we please to such things as we please; but, in my opinion, it is a part of the natural history of man, and politicians and philosophers may as well project to make the animal live without bones or blood, as society can pretend to establish a free government without attention to it.

Quincy, 16 August, 1813.

I can proceed no further with this letter, as I intended.

Your friend, my only daughter, expired yesterday morning in the arms of her husband, her son, her daughter, her father and mother, her husband's two sisters, and two of her nieces, in the forty-ninth year of her age, forty of which she was the healthiest and firmest of us all. Since which she has been a monument to suffering and to patience.

THOMAS M^cKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 20 August, 1813.

I can, at length, furnish you with a copy of the proceedings of the Congress, held at New York, in 1765; it is inclosed herewith. After diligent inquiry, I had not been able to procure a single copy, either in manuscript or print, done in the United States, but fortunately met one published by J. Almon, in London, in 1767, with a collection of American tracts, in four octavo volumes, from which I caused the present one to be printed. It may be of some use to the historian at least.

The Marquis de Casa Yrujo, with my daughter, their children and servants, made me a visit on his return from an embassy to the prince regent of Portugal, at Rio Janeiro, in Brazil, last June was a year, and remained here until a few weeks ago, owing to the embargo, war, blockades, &c., when they sailed for Cadiz. The above circumstances, with others, will, I trust, be some apology for my long delay in answering your last esteemed letter.

In the Congress of 1765, there were several conspicuous characters. Mr. James Otis appeared to me to be the boldest and best speaker. I voted for him as our President, but Brigadier Ruggles succeeded by one vote, owing to the number of the committee from New York, as we voted individually. When the business was finished, our president would not sign the petitions, and peremptorily refused to assign any reasons, until I pressed him so hard that he at last said, "it was against his

conscience," on which word I rung the change so loud, that a plain challenge was given by him and accepted, in the presence of the whole corps; but he departed the next morning before day, without an adieu to any of his brethren. He seemed to accord with what was done during the session so fully and heartily, that Mr. Otis told me frequently it gave him surprise, as he confessed he suspected his sincerity.

There was less fortitude in that body than in the succeeding Congress of 1774; indeed, some of the members seemed as timid as if engaged in a traitorous conspiracy. Mr. Ogden, then speaker of the New Jersey assembly, following the example of the president, declined to sign the petitions, though warmly solicited by myself in private, and also by my father-in-law, Colonel Borden, his colleague. The consequence of my mentioning this fact, as I returned to Newcastle through New Jersey, was to Mr. Ogden a burning in effigy in several of the counties, and his removal from the office of speaker, at the next meeting of the general assembly; and to me, menaces of another challenge. The great mass of the people were at that time zealous in the cause of America. Other incidents of that day are recollected, but they are of trivial import.

In the year 1778, and afterwards, until the preliminaries of peace were signed, the members of Congress varied yearly in point of talents and exertions in favor of the revolution. They seemed to be considerably governed by the prospects before them, as they were promising or the contrary; however, a great majority were staunch whigs at all times.

Whatever may be the fate of our government in the United States, I decidedly think with you, for the reason you assign, that a democratic form in France, in the present age, was preposterous. I entertain the same opinion of the Spanish provinces in South America. The form established last year by the Cortes of Spain is admirably adapted to the state of civilization in the peninsula. It is a capital performance, but will be attacked and resisted by the inquisitors, Jesuits, monks, and all the bigots and petty tyrants.

It does not seem to me, that either of your successors enjoys more ease than your predecessor. Mr. Madison has paid too great a deference to the recommendations to office by low and designing men, who stood very much in need of recommenda-

tions themselves, though excellent democrats, if they were to be credited. Mr. Jefferson split on the same rock. Many of their appointments have been exceedingly improper. Though General Washington conferred offices on some tories, yet they were capable, and only undeserving.

My paper is drawing to a close; so is my life. I am now in my eightieth year, therefore more than a year older than you. Had you not noticed the *quiveration* of your hand (an expressive word, though newly used) I should not have discovered it: mine quivers very much when feverish, or agitated by severe exercise; my eyes grow dimmer, my hearing duller, and I have other symptoms of age; but why repeat grievances that cannot be redressed? May you not only continue to enjoy, but increase your health and *otium cum dignitate* with every other blessing. Dear Sir, your friend,

THO'S MCKEAN.

TO THOMAS MCKEAN.

Quincy, 31 August, 1813.

Your friendly letter of the 20th, with the authentic account of the proceedings of the Congress held at New York, A. D. 1765, on the subject of the American stamp act, though they found me in the deepest affliction for the loss of my daughter, were very acceptable, and deserve my thanks.

There was a prior Congress held at Albany in 1754 or 1755, in which Franklin, Hutchinson, Wells, and Brattle, with others, assisted. Where is any account of that to be found?

Can you account for the apathy, the antipathy of this nation to their own history? Is there not a repugnance to the thought of looking back? While thousands of frivolous novels are read with eagerness and got by heart, the history of our own native country is not only neglected, but despised and abhorred.

You may conjecture my suspicions from what follows. Were I a man of fortune, I would offer a gold medal to the man who should produce the most instances of the friendship of Great Britain toward this country from 1600 to 1813.

I have had knowledge enough of the Marquis de Casa Yrujo and his lady, your lovely daughter, and notwithstanding all

political flickerings, to esteem them both, and wish them all the felicity that you can desire for them. They live, as you and I have lived, in times of confusion and uncertainty more distressing than the ordinary lot of humanity.

In times like those in which you and I have lived, we are not masters, we can scarcely be said to be fathers, of our own families. I have three children born in Quincy, one in Boston. I have one grandson born in London, another on Long Island, another in Berlin, several in Quincy, several in New York, several in Boston, one born and died in St. Petersburg. Is this a desirable history of a family? I trow not.

I will not tell you what I would prefer. You would think me a dunce or an hypocrite.

Your history of Otis and Ruggles is familiar to me. I knew them both. Ruggles was my cousin; Otis, my friend and one of my patrons. I could not have drawn the character of either with more precision than you have done. Both high-minded men, exalted souls, acting in scenes they could not comprehend, and acting parts, whose effects and consequences will last longer than their names will be remembered.

You say that at the time of the Congress, in 1765, "The great mass of the people were zealous in the cause of America." "The great mass of the people" is an expression that deserves analysis. New York and Pennsylvania were so nearly divided, if their propensity was not against us, that if New England on one side and Virginia on the other had not kept them in awe, they would have joined the British. Marshall, in his life of Washington, tells us, that the southern States were nearly equally divided. Look into the Journals of Congress, and you will see how seditious, how near rebellion were several counties of New York, and how much trouble we had to compose them. The last contest, in the town of Boston, in 1775, between whig and tory, was decided by five against two. Upon the whole, if we allow two thirds of the people to have been with us in the revolution, is not the allowance ample? Are not two thirds of the nation now with the administration? Divided we ever have been, and ever must be. Two thirds always had and will have more difficulty to struggle with the one third than with all our foreign enemies.

A letter from you will always console your old friend.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 2 September, 1813

Οὐδὲ γυνὴ κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναίνεται εἶναι ἄκοιτις
Πλουσίου, ἀλλ' ἀφνεὸν βούλεται ἀντ' ἀγαθοῦ.
Χρήματα γὰρ τιμῶσι· καὶ ἐκ κακοῦ ἐσθλὸς ἔγημε
Καὶ κακὸς ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ· πλοῦτος ἔμιξε γένος.

Grotius renders this into Latin thus:

Nec dedignetur ditemque malumque maritum
Femina: divitiæ præ probitate placent.
In pretio pretium est: genus et prænobile vili,
Obscurum claro, miscet avaritia.

I should render the Greek into English thus:

"Nor does a woman disdain to be the wife of a bad rich man. But she prefers a man of property before a good man; for riches are honored, and a good man marries from a bad family, and a bad man from a good one. Wealth mingles races."

Now, please to tell me, whether my translation has not hit the sense of Theognis as exactly as that of Grotius?

Tell me, also, whether poet, orator, historian, or philosopher, can paint the picture of every city, county, or State, in our pure, uncorrupted, unadulterated, uncontaminated federal republic, or, in France, England, Holland, and all the rest of Christendom or Mahometanism, in more precise lines or colors? Another translation of the whole passage of Theognis is this:

Arietes quidem et asinos quærimus, Cyrne, et equos,
Generosos, et quisque vult ex bonis admittere; ducere autem malam (filiam)
Mali, non renuit generosus vir, si ei pecunias multas dederit.
Nulla (femina) mali viri recusat esse uxor divitis; sed divitem vult
Pro bono. Opes quidem æstimat, et ex malo (natam) bonus ducet
Et malus ex bono ortam. Divitiæ miscent genus.

Now, my friend, who are the ἄριστοι? Philosophers may answer, "the wise and good." But the world, mankind, have, by their practice, always answered, "the rich, the beautiful, and well-born." And philosophers themselves, in marrying their children, prefer the rich, the handsome, and the well-descended, to the wise and good.

What chance have talents and virtues, in competition with wealth and birth and beauty?

> Haud facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstant
> Res angustæ domi.
>
> One truth is clear, by all the world confessed,
> Slow rises worth, by poverty depressed.

The five pillars of aristocracy are beauty, wealth, birth, genius, and virtue. Any one of the three first can, at any time, overbear any one or both of the two last.

Let me ask again, what a wave of public opinion, in favor of birth, has been spread over the globe by Abraham, by Hercules, by Mahomet, by Guelphs, Ghibellines, Bourbons, and a miserable Scottish chief, Stuart, by Zengis, by ——, by ——, by a million of others. And what a wave will be spread by Napoleon and by Washington! Their remotest cousins will be sought, and will be proud, and will avail themselves of their descent. Call this principle, prejudice, folly, ignorance, baseness, slavery, stupidity, adulation, superstition, or what you will, I will not contradict you. But the fact in natural, moral, political, and domestic history, I will not deny, or dispute, or question.

And is this great fact in the natural history of man, this unalterable principle of morals, philosophy, policy, domestic felicity, and daily experience from the creation, to be overlooked, forgotten, neglected, or hypocritically waved out of sight, by a legislator, by a professed writer upon civil government, and upon constitutions of civil government?

Thus far had I written, when your favor of August 22d was laid on my table from the post-office. I can only say at present that I can pursue this idle speculation no further, at least till I have replied to this fresh proof of friendship and confidence. Mrs. A. joins in cordial thanks with

J. A.

You may laugh at the introduction of beauty among the pillars of aristocracy. But Madame du Barry says, "*la véritable royauté c'est la beauté*," and there is not a more certain truth. Beauty, grace, figure, attitude, movement, have, in innumerable instances, prevailed over wealth, birth, talents, virtues, and

every thing else, in men of the highest rank, greatest power, and, sometimes, the most exalted genius, greatest fame, and highest merit.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 14 September, 1813.

I owe you a thousand thanks for your favor of August 22d, and its inclosures, and for Doctor Priestley's "Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy compared with those of Revelation." Your letter to Dr. Rush, and the syllabus, I return inclosed with this, according to your injunction, though with great reluctance. May I beg a copy of both? They will do you no harm, me and others, much good. I hope you will pursue your plan, for I am confident you will produce a work much more valuable than Priestley's, though that is curious, and, considering the expiring powers with which it was written, admirable.

The bill in parliament for the relief of Anti-Trinitarians, is a great event, and will form an epoch in ecclesiastical history. The motion was made by my friend Smith, of Clapham, a friend of the Belshams. I should be very happy to hear that the bill is passed.

The human understanding is a revelation from its maker, which can never be disputed or doubted. There can be no scepticism, Pyrrhonism, or incredulity or infidelity here. No prophecies, no miracles are necessary to prove this celestial communication. This revelation has made it certain that two and one make three, and that one is not three nor can three be one. We can never be so certain of any prophecy, or the fulfilment of any prophecy, or of any miracle, or the design of any miracle, as we are from the revelation of nature, that is, nature's God, that two and two are equal to four. Miracles or prophecies might frighten us out of our wits, might scare us to death, might induce us to lie, to say that we believe that two and two make five, but we should not believe it; we should know the contrary.

Had you and I been forty days with Moses on Mount Sinai, and admitted to behold the divine Shechinah, and there told that

one was three and three one, we might not have had courage to deny it, but we could not have believed it. The thunders and lightnings and earthquakes, and the transcendent splendors and glories, might have overwhelmed us with terror and amazement, but we could not have believed the doctrine. We should be more likely to say in our hearts — whatever we might say with our lips —, This is chance. There is no God, no truth. This is all delusion, fiction, and a lie, or it is all chance. But what is chance? It is motion; it is action; it is event; it is phenomenon without cause. Chance is no cause at all; it is nothing, and nothing has produced all this pomp and splendor, and nothing may produce our eternal damnation in the flames of hell-fire and brimstone, for what we know, as well as this tremendous exhibition of terror and falsehood.

God has infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; he created the universe; his duration is eternal, *a parte ante* and *a parte post.* His presence is as extensive as space. What is space? An infinite spherical *vacuum.* He created this speck of dirt and the human species for his glory; and with the deliberate design of making nine tenths of our species miserable for ever for his glory. This is the doctrine of Christian theologians, in general, ten to one. Now, my friend, can prophecies or miracles convince you or me that infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power, created, and preserves for a time, innumerable millions, to make them miserable for ever, for his own glory? Wretch! What is his glory? Is he ambitious? Does he want promotion? Is he vain, tickled with adulation, exulting and triumphing in his power and the sweetness of his vengeance? Pardon me, my Maker, for these awful questions. My answer to them is always ready. I believe no such things. My adoration of the author of the universe is too profound and too sincere. The love of God and his creation — delight, joy, triumph, exultation in my own existence — though but an atom, a *molécule organique* in the universe — are my religion.

Howl, snarl, bite, ye Calvinistic, ye Athanasian divines, if you will; ye will say I am no Christian; I say ye are no Christians, and there the account is balanced. Yet I believe all the honest men among you are Christians, in my sense of the word.

When I was at college, I was a mighty metaphysician, at

least I thought myself such, and such men as Locke, Hemmenway, and West thought me so too, for we were forever disputing, though in great good humor.

When I was sworn as an attorney in 1758, in Boston, though I lived in Braintree, I was in a low state of health, thought in great danger of a consumption, living on milk, vegetables, pudding, and water, not an atom of meat or a drop of spirit; my next neighbor, my cousin, my friend, Dr. Savil, was my physician. He was anxious for me, and did not like to take upon himself the sole responsibility of my recovery. He invited me to a ride. I mounted my horse, and rode with him to Hingham, on a visit to Dr. Ezekiel Hersey, a physician of great fame, who felt my pulse, looked in my eyes, heard Savil describe my regimen and course of medicine, and then pronounced his oracle: "Persevere, and as sure as there is a God in Heaven you will recover." He was an everlasting talker, and ran out into history, philosophy, metaphysics, &c., and frequently put questions to me as if he wanted to sound me and see if there was any thing in me besides hectic fever. I was young and then very bashful, however saucy I may have sometimes been since. I gave him very modest and very diffident answers. But when he got upon metaphysics, I seemed to feel a little bolder, and ventured into something like argument with him. I drove him up, as I thought, into a corner, from which he could not escape. "Sir, it will follow, from what you have now advanced, that the universe, as distinct from God, is both infinite and eternal." "Very true," said Dr. Hersey; "your inference is just; the consequence is inevitable, and I believe the universe to be both eternal and infinite." Here I was brought up. I was defeated. I was not prepared for this answer. This was fifty-five years ago. When I was in England, from 1785 to 1788, I may say I was intimate with Dr. Price. I had much conversation with him at his own house, at my house, and at the houses and tables of many friends. In some of our most unreserved conversations, when we have been alone, he has repeatedly said to me: "I am inclined to believe that the universe is eternal and infinite: it seems to me that an eternal and infinite effect must necessarily flow from an eternal and infinite cause; and an infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, that could have been induced to produce a universe in time, must have produced it

from eternity. It seems to me, the effect must flow from the cause."

Now, my friend Jefferson, suppose an eternal, self-existent being, existing from eternity, possessed of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, in absolute, total solitude, six thousand years ago conceiving the benevolent project of creating a universe! I have no more to say at present. It has been long, very long, a settled opinion in my mind, that there is now, ever will be, and ever was, but one being who can understand the universe, and that it is not only vain but wicked for insects to pretend to comprehend it.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 15 September, 1813.

My last sheet would not admit an observation that was material to my design. Dr. Price "was inclined to think," that infinite wisdom and goodness could not permit infinite power to be inactive from eternity, but that an infinite and eternal universe must have necessarily flowed from these attributes.

Plato's system was, ἀγαθός was eternal, self-existent, &c. His idea, his word, his reason, his wisdom, his goodness, or, in one word, his "Logos" was omnipotent, and produced the universe from all eternity.

Now, as far as you and I can understand Hersey, Price, and Plato, are they not of one theory, of one mind? What is the difference? I own, an eternal solitude of a self-existent being, infinitely wise, powerful, and good, is to me altogether incomprehensible and incredible. I could as soon believe the Athanasian creed. You will ask me, what conclusion I draw from all this. I answer, I drop into myself, and acknowledge myself to be a fool. No mind but one can see through the immeasurable system. It would be presumption and impiety in me to dogmatize on such subjects. My duties, in my little infinitesimal circle, I can understand and feel. The duties of a son, a brother, a father, a neighbor, a citizen, I can see and feel; but I trust the ruler with his skies.

> Si quid novisti rectius istis,
> Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

This world is a mixture of the sublime and beautiful, the base and contemptible, the whimsical and ridiculous (according to our narrow sense and trifling feelings). It is a riddle and an enigma. You will not be surprised, then, if I should descend from these heights to an egregious trifle. But first, let me say, I asked you in a former letter how far advanced we were in the science of aristocracy since Theognis's stallions, jacks, and rams. Have not Chancellor Livingston and Major-General Humphreys introduced a hereditary aristocracy of merino sheep? How shall we get out of this aristocracy? It is entailed upon us forever. And an aristocracy of land-jobbers and stock-jobbers is equally and irremediably entailed upon us to endless generations.

Now for the odd, the whimsical, the frivolous. I had scarcely sealed my last letter to you, upon Theognis's doctrine of well-born stallions, jacks, and rams, when they brought me from the post-office a packet, without post-mark, without letter, without name, date, or place. Nicely sealed, was a printed copy of eighty or ninety pages, in large, full octavo, entitled, —— Section first. Aristocracy.

I gravely composed my risible muscles, and read it through. It is, from beginning to end, an attack upon me, by name, for the doctrines of aristocracy in my three volumes of Defence, &c. The conclusion of the whole is, that an aristocracy of bank-paper is as bad as the nobility of France or England. I most assuredly will not controvert this point, with this man. Who he is, I cannot conjecture. The Honorable John Taylor, of Virginia, of all men living or dead, first occurred to me.

Is it Oberon, is it Queen Mab, that reigns and sports with us little beings? I thought my books, as well as myself, were forgotten. But, behold! I am to become a great man in my expiring moments. Theognis and Plato, and Hersey and Price, and Jefferson and I, must go down to posterity together; and I know not, upon the whole, where to wish for better company. I wish to add Vanderkemp, who has been here to see me after an interruption of twenty-four years. I could and ought to add many others, but the catalogue would be too long.

Why is Plato associated with Theognis, &c.? Because no man ever expressed so much terror of the power of birth. His genius could invent no remedy or precaution against it, but a

community of wives, a confusion of families, a total extinction of all relations of father, son, and brother. Did the French revolutionists contrive much better against the influence of birth?

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 22 September, 1813.

Considering all things, I admire Dr. Priestley's last effort, for which I am entirely indebted to you. But, as I think it is extremely imperfect, I beg of you to pursue the investigation according to your promise to Dr. Rush, and according to your syllabus. It may be presumptuous in me to denominate any thing of Dr. Priestley's imperfect; but I must avow, that among all the vast exertions of his genius, I have never found one that is not imperfect, and this last is egregiously so. I will instance, at present, in one article. I find no notice of Cleanthes, one of whose sayings alone ought to have commanded his attention. He compared "philosophers to instruments of music, which made a noise without understanding it or themselves." He was ridiculed by his brother philosophers, and called "an ass." He owned he was the ass of Zeno, and "the only one whose back and shoulders were stout enough to carry his burdens." Why has not Priestley quoted more from Zeno and his disciples? Were they too Christian? Though he lived two centuries and a half before Christ.

If I did not know it would be sending coals to Newcastle, I would, with all my dimness of eyes and trembling of fingers, copy in Greek the hymn of Cleanthes, and request you to compare it with any thing of Moses, of David, of Solomon. Instead of those ardent oriental figures, which are so difficult to understand, we find that divine simplicity, which constitutes the charm of Grecian eloquence in prose and verse. Pope had read, if Priestley had not, the

ΚΛΕΑΝΘΟΥΣ ΥΜΝΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΔΙΑ.

Κύδιστ' ἀθανάτων, πολυώνυμε, πανκρατὲς αἰεὶ
Ζεῦ, φύσεως ἀρχηγὲ, νόμου μέτα πάντα κυβερνῶν,
Χαῖρε.

"Most glorious of immortal beings! Though denominated by

innumerable names and titles, always omnipotent! Beginning and end of nature, governing the universe by fixed laws, blessed be thy name!"

What think you of this translation? Is it too Jewish or too too Christian? Pope did not think it was either, for the first sentence in his universal prayer is more Jewish and more Christian still. If it is not a literal translation, it is a close paraphrase of this simple verse of Cleanthes, —

> Father of all! in every age,
> In every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

But it may be said, for it has been said, that Pope was a Deist, and Swift too, as well as Bolingbroke. What will not men say? But is the existence, the omnipotence, the eternity, the alpha and omega, and the universal Providence of one Supreme Being governing by fixed laws, asserted by St. John, in his Gospel, or in the Apocalypse, whether his or not, in clearer or more precise terms? Can you conjecture a reason why Grotius has not translated this hymn? Were Grotius and Priestley both afraid that the stoics would appear too much like Unitarians, Jews, and Christians? Duport has translated the sentence thus: —

> Magne Pater divûm, cui nomina multa, sed una
> Omnipotens semper virtus, tu, Jupiter, auctor
> Naturæ, certâ qui singula lege gubernas,
> Rex, salve!

Bougainville has translated it, —

> Père et maître des dieux, auteur de la nature,
> Jupiter, O Sagesse! O loi sublime et pure!
> Unité Souveraine, à qui tous les mortels,
> Sous mille noms divers, élèvent des autels;
> Je t'adore, nos cœurs te doivent leur hommage,
> Nous sommes tes enfans, ton ombre, ton image;
> Et tout ce qui respire, animé par tes mains,
> A célébrer ta gloire, invite les humains.
> Béni sois à jamais!

I am so awkward in Italian, that I am ashamed to quote that

language to you; but Pompeius, a gentleman of Verona, has translated it thus, and you will understand it.

> O Glorioso fra gli eterni, in guise
> Molte nomato, omnipossente ognora,
> Tu che, tutto con legge governando,
> De la natura sei principio e duce,
> Salve, O Giove.

It appears to me that the great principle of the Hebrews was the fear of God; that of the Gentiles, honor the gods; that of Christians, the *love* of God. Could the quiveration of my nerves and the inflammation of my eyes be cured, and my age diminished by twenty or thirty years, I would attend you in these researches with infinitely more pleasure than I would George the Fourth, Napoleon, Alexander, or Madison. But only a few hours, a few moments remain for your old friend.

THOMAS McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 28 September, 1813.

With sincerity I condole with you on the death of your daughter. I had five children who have died, three of whom have been married and left a numerous offspring. By these events *we* have sustained the deprivation of great comforts; but *our* loss is *their* ineffable gain. They are in the bosom of their father and their God. These are among the common calamities of life; resignation to the dispensations of Providence, and gratitude for all the blessings left us, are indispensable duties.

Your favor of the 31st last month would have been acknowledged before now, but from a hope I entertained of giving you some account of the Congress at Albany, in 1754. However, after considerable inquiry, I have been disappointed.[1] I have a faint recollection, that it was appointed by the British ministry for the ostensible purpose of ascertaining the boundaries of the several colonies to the eastward of Delaware; but in reality to

[1] Much has been published on this subject since. See *Collections Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. xxv. pp. 5 – 74. Hutchinson's *Massachusetts*, vol. iii. p. 20. Sparks's *Franklin*, vol. iii. pp. 22 – 36.

propose the least offensive plan for raising a revenue in America. In 1739, Sir William Keith, a Scotch gentleman, who had been a lieutenant-governor of Pennsylvania, proposed such an assembly to the ministry. He also proposed the extension of the British stamp-duties to the colonies. He was then, I believe, in the Fleet prison. The hints he gave were embraced, the first in 1754, the second in 1764.

It has been long a matter of surprise to me, that no gentleman of talents and character has undertaken to write a history of the former British colonies, now United States of America, at least from 1756 to 1806, a period of fifty very important years. Such a work would not only be a great benefit to posterity, but also to the author. It would sell well.

To form an opinion, that a majority of the people of Pennsylvania were against the American revolution at its commencement, was not uncommon, especially by strangers. The mistake arose from the circumstance of a large majority of their representatives and civil officers being in the opposition. This State was first settled by a colony of Quakers, their proprietor and governor, William Penn, being at the head of the sect. They had the entire government or rule of Pennsylvania from 1682 until 1776, by the following means. The province was in the beginning divided into three counties, Philadelphia, Chester, and Bucks, and when the three lower counties on Delaware (now State of Delaware) separated from them in 1700, each county had eight members in the legislature, and the city, having been incorporated and inhabited chiefly by that sect, was allowed two. Eight other counties were erected prior to the revolution, and were allowed, some two, some but one representative, so that in all they had but ten; although, if they had founded the representation according to the number of human beings in each district or county, the Quakers would have been greatly overruled, even adding all the tories or enemies of the revolution to their number. The voice of the representatives was not the voice of the people, as is the case with the British parliament; the three Quaker counties, having twenty-four members in assembly, made all the laws. They gave great trouble to the whigs, but they were kept under by fear as well as by superior numbers. From that day, the people called "Friends," have ceased to rule Pennsylvania. They foresaw

the consequences of an equal representation, as it would affect themselves, and this was a principal cause of their aversion to a change in the form of our government as a body, though many individuals of their society differed with them, and became active and good citizens.

In the marriage of our children, *their*, not *our* happiness, is to be chiefly consulted. I confess, my wish is to have them established in their native country.

On reflection, I cannot refer to a single instance of disinterested or evident friendship of Great Britain towards this country during the period you mention. Every act which might bear such an aspect, has been performed for the interest of the administration alone, although coupled in some cases with that of their own island.

I shall be always pleased with your correspondence, and happy in contributing to your amusement. Your able talent for writing history, and your eminent public stations, induced a hope that we should be favored with an account of the transactions in America, for at least the last sixty years, from your pen.

THO'S MCKEAN.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 4 October, 1813.

Σὲ γὰρ πάντεσσι θέμις θνητοῖσι προσαυδᾶν.

"It is not only permitted, but enjoined upon all mortals to address you." Why should not our divines translate it,

"It is our duty and our privilege to address the throne of thy grace, and pray for all needed lawful blessings, temporal and spiritual"?

θέμις was the goddess of honesty, justice, decency, and right; the wife of Jove, another name for Juno. She presided over all oracles, deliberations, and councils. She commanded all mortals to pray to Jupiter for all lawful benefits and blessings. Now, is not this (so far forth) the essence of Christian devotion? Is not this Christian piety? Is it not an acknowledgment of the existence of a Supreme Being, of his universal Providence, of a righteous administration of the government of

the universe? And what can Jews, Christians, or Mahometans do more? Priestley, the heroic Priestley, would not have dared to answer or to ask these questions, though he might have answered them consistently enough with the spirit of his system. I regret, that Grotius has not translated this hymn, and cannot account for his omission of it. Duport translates the above line only by, —

> "Te nempe licet mortalibus ægris,
> Cunctis compellare."

Where he finds his *ægris*, I know not; no such idea is in the Greek. All mortals, sick or well, have a right, and it is their duty, to pray, as far as I can understand the Greek. Bougainville translates it, —

> "Et tout ce qui respire animé par tes mains,
> A célébrer ta gloire, invite les humains.
> Béni sois à jamais!"

This translation is Christian with a witness. None but a Jew, a Mahometan, or a Christian could ever have translated that simple line in this manner. Yet, the idea, the sentiment, translated into Christianity, is very well; well enough. The gentleman of Verona, Girolamo Pompei translates it thus, after "*Salve, O Giove*," for "Χαῖρε,"

> "Però che gli uomin tutti,
> Dritto é ben, che a te volgan le parole."

Now, tell me what resemblance of the Greek you can find in this Italian version? In this manner are the most ancient Greek theologians rendered and transmitted to our youth by the Christians!

> Ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμὲν, ἰὴς μίμημα λαχόντες
> Μοῦνον, ὅσα ζώει τε καὶ ἕρπει ὀνήτ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν.

Ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμὲν. I presume, is the phrase quoted by Saint Paul, when he says to the Athenians, "one of your own poets hath said, we are all his offspring." Acts, xvii. 28. "For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain, also, of your own poets have said, 'for we are also his offspring.' Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto silver, or gold, or stone graven by art and man's device." This reasoning is irresist-

ible; for what can be more mad than to represent the eternal, almighty, omnipresent cause and principle of the universe by statues and pictures, by coins or medals!

Duport renders these two lines by, —

"Omnes tua namque propago
Nos sumus, æternæ quasi imago vocis et echo
Tantum, quotquot humi spirantes repimus."

Bougainville translates them thus: —

Nous sommes tes enfans, ton ombre, ton image,
Et tout ce qui respire, animé par tes mains,
A célébrer ta gloire invite les humains.
Béni sois à jamais!

Pompei renders them: —

Che siam tua stirpe, e solo noi, fra quanti
Vivon mortali e muovon su la terra,
Lo imitar de la voce abbiam sortito.

Moses says, Genesis i. 27: "God created man in his own image." What, then, is the difference between Cleanthes and Moses? Are not the being and attributes of the Supreme Being, the resemblance, the image, the shadow of God in the intelligence and moral qualities of man, and the lawfulness and duty of prayer, as clearly asserted by Cleanthes as by Moses? And did not the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese, believe all this, as well as the Jews and Greeks?

Alexander appears to have behaved to the Jews as Napoleon did to the Mahometans in the pyramid of Grand Cairo. Ptolemy, the greatest of his generals, and a greater man than himself, was so impressed with what he learned in Judea, that he employed seventy learned men to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, nearly three hundred years before Christ. He sent learned men to collect books from all nations, and deposited them in the Alexandrian library. Will any man make me believe that Cæsar, that Pompey, that Cicero, that Seneca, that Tacitus, that Dionysius Halicarnassensis, that Plutarch, had never seen or heard of the Septuagint? Why might not Cleanthes have seen the Septuagint? The curiosity of Pompey to see the interior of the temple shows that the system of the Jews was become an object of speculation. It is impossible

to believe that the Septuagint was unknown and unheard of by Greeks or Romans at that time, at least by the great generals, orators, historians, philosophers, and statesmen, who looked through the then known world for information of every thing. On the other hand, how do we know how much Moses, Samuel, Joshua, David, Solomon, and Esdras, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah learned in Babylon, Egypt, and Persia? The destruction of the library at Alexandria is all the answer we can obtain to these questions. I believe that Jews, Grecians, Romans, and Christians all conspired or connived at that savage catastrophe. I believe Cleanthes to be as good a Christian as Priestley.

But enough of my school-boy criticisms and crude philosophy, problematical history and heretical divinity, for the present.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 12 November, 1813.

As I owe you more for your letters of October 12th and 28th than I shall be able to pay, I shall begin with the P. S. to the last. I am very sorry to say that I cannot "assist your memory in the inquiries of your letter of August 22d."[1] I really know not who was the compositor of any one of the petitions or addresses you enumerate. Nay, farther, I am certain I never did know. I was so shallow a politician, that I was not aware of the importance of those compositions. They all appeared to me, in the circumstances of the country, like children's play at marbles or push-pin, or, rather, like misses in their teens emulating each other in their pearls, their bracelets, their diamond pins and Brussels lace.

In the Congress of 1774, there was not one member, except Patrick Henry, who appeared to me sensible of the precipice, or, rather, the pinnacle on which he stood, and had candor and courage enough to acknowledge it. America is in total ignorance, or under infinite deception, concerning that assembly.

[1] The principal inquiry was, who drew the petition to the king, in the Congress of 1774.

To draw the characters of them all would require a volume, and would now be considered as a caricature-print; one third tories, another whigs, and the rest mongrels. There was a little aristocracy among us, of talents and letters; Mr. Dickinson was *primus inter pares*, the bellwether, the leader of the aristocratical flock. Billy, *alias* Governor Livingston, and his son-in-law, Mr. Jay, were of this privileged order. The credit of most, if not all, those compositions was often, if not generally, given to one or the other of the choice spirits. Mr. Dickinson, however, was not on any of the original committees. He came not into Congress until October 17th; he was not appointed till the 15th by his assembly.[1] Congress adjourned, October 27th, though our correct secretary has not recorded any final adjournment or dissolution. Mr. Dickinson was in Congress but ten days. The business was all prepared, arranged, and even, in a manner, finished before his arrival. R. H. Lee was the chairman of the committee for preparing "the loyal and dutiful address to his Majesty." Johnson and Henry were acute spirits, and understood the controversy very well, though they had not the advantages of education, like Lee and John Rutledge. The subject had been near a month under discussion in Congress, and most of the materials thrown out there. It underwent another deliberation in committee, after which they made the customary compliment to their chairman, by requesting him to prepare and report a draught, which was done, and after examination, correction, amelioration, or pejoration, as usual, reported to Congress. October 3d, 4th, and 5th were taken up in debating and deliberating on matters proper to be contained in the address to his Majesty.[2] October 21st, the address to the king was, after debate, recommitted, and Mr. John Dickinson added to the committee. The first draught was made, and all the essential materials put together by Lee. It might be embellished and seasoned afterwards with some of Mr. Dickinson's piety, but I know not that it was.[3] Neat and handsome as the composition is, having never had any confidence in the utility of it, I never have thought much

[1] Journals, vol. i. p. 30.

[2] Journals, vol. i. p. 22.

[3] It is now well known to have been the composition of Mr. Dickinson. Much light is shed upon this question by an article in the American Quarterly Review, vol. i. p. 413.

about it since it was adopted. Indeed, I never bestowed much attention on any of those addresses, which were all but repetitions of the same things, the same facts and arguments, — dress and ornaments rather than body, soul, or substance. My thoughts and cares were nearly monopolized by the theory of our rights and wrongs, by measures for the defence of the country, and the means of governing ourselves. I was in a great error, no doubt, and am ashamed to confess it, for those things were necessary to give popularity to our cause, both at home and abroad; and, to show my stupidity in a stronger light, the reputation of any one of those compositions has been a more splendid distinction than any aristocratical star or garter in the escutcheon of every man who has enjoyed it. Very sorry I cannot give you more satisfactory information, and more so, that I cannot, at present, give more attention to your two last excellent letters.

N. B. I am almost ready to believe that John Taylor, of Carolina, or of Hazel Wood, Port Royal, Virginia, is the author of 630 pages of printed octavo upon my books, that I have received. The style answers every characteristic that you have intimated. Within a week, I have received and looked into his Arator. They must spring from the same brain, as Minerva issued from the head of Jove, or, rather, as Venus rose from the froth of the sea. There is, however, a great deal of good sense in Arator, and there is some in his Aristocracy.

THOMAS McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 15 November, 1813.

The anecdote of Sir William Keith's proposal to the British ministry is to be found in the latter end of the 1st volume of American Tracts, printed by J. Almon, in London, 1767. It had been published in London in 1739, and is titled "A proposal for establishing by act of parliament the duties upon stamped paper and parchment in all the British colonies." Part of the anecdote I had by tradition, and in a novel, "Peregrine

Pickle;" for I have read and still read novels. These fabulous histories afford me not only amusement but pleasure, because they almost universally make vice detested and punished, and virtue triumphant, which is not the case of history of real life.

With respect to the histories of North America hitherto published, I concur with you in opinion. They were not popular, because the authors were little known, and it was known, that they had not an opportunity of *personal* knowledge of the facts they related, and in several of them were mistaken. The authors seem to have paid too much attention to those who they supposed would, from their reputation for wealth and influence, be most likely to promote the sale of their books, or otherwise advance their fortunes. This temptation is now done away; the favored characters are all dead, and very few of their descendants at present in any way distinguished.

I have briefly mentioned the situation of the people of Pennsylvania at the time of the American revolution; the like shall now be done with respect to Delaware. This small State was inhabited before Pennsylvania; it consists of only three counties, namely — Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex; the last was settled by a few families from Sweden, more from Holland, but the great mass from England. Kent was nearly in the same proportions; and Newcastle was inhabited from Sweden, Holland, but the great majority were from Ireland; there were a few from England and Scotland. In Newcastle, three fifths were at the time of the revolution Presbyterians, in Kent, about five eighths Protestant Episcopalians, and in Sussex, two thirds of the latter. The Society in London "for propagating the gospel in foreign parts," had about half a dozen missionaries, perhaps more, in the State of Delaware, to some of whom they gave a salary of 60*l.*, to others 50*l.* sterling a year. These ministers foresaw, that if America became an independent state or nation, their salaries would necessarily cease. It was their interest, therefore, to oppose the revolution, and they did oppose it, though with as much secrecy as practicable. They told their hearers, many of whom, especially in Sussex, were illiterate, ignorant, and bigoted, that it was a plan of the Presbyterians to get their religion established; that it originated in New England, and was fostered by the Presbyterians in every colony or province A majority of this State were unquestionably against the inde-

pendence of America; but the most sensible of the Episcopalians, the Baptists and Quakers, and the Presbyterians, with very few exceptions, prevailed against them, as they believed they would be overpowered, with the help of the other colonies, if they resisted. I could not avoid remarking, that I was chosen, unanimously, speaker of the House of Representatives of this State, when, of all the members present, there were but six, including myself, who were esteemed whigs.

That you may continue to enjoy health and every other blessing is the sincere prayer of, dear Sir, your old friend,

THO'S MCKEAN.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 25 December, 1813.

Answer my letter at your leisure. Give yourself no concern. I write as a refuge and protection against *ennui.*

The fundamental principle of all philosophy and all Christianity is, "*Rejoice always in all things.*" "Be thankful at all times for all good, and all that we call evil." Will it not follow, that I ought to rejoice and be thankful that Priestley has lived? Aye, that Voltaire has lived? I should have given my reason for rejoicing in Voltaire, &c. It is because I believe they have done more than even Luther or Calvin to lower the tone of that proud hierarchy that shot itself up above the clouds, and more to propagate religious liberty than Calvin, or Luther, or even Locke. That Gibbon has lived? That Hume has lived, though a conceited Scotchman? That Bolingbroke has lived, though a haughty, arrogant, supercilious dogmatist? That Burke and Johnson have lived, though superstitious slaves, or self-deceiving hypocrites both? Is it not laughable to hear Burke call Bolingbroke a superficial writer; to hear him ask, "who ever read him through!" Had I been present, I should have answered him: "I, I myself! I have read him through, more than fifty years ago, and more than five times in my life, and once within five years past. And, in my opinion, the epithet 'superficial' belongs to you and your friend Johnson more than to him." I might say much more; but I believe Burke and Johnson to have been as political Christians as Leo X.

I return to Priestley, though I have great complaints against him for personal injuries and persecution, at the same time that I forgive it all, and hope and pray that he may be pardoned for it all above. Dr. Brocklesby, an intimate friend and convivial companion of Johnson, told me, that Johnson died in agonies of horror of annihilation; and all the accounts we have of his death corroborate this account of Brocklesby. Dread of annihilation! Dread of nothing! A dread of nothing, I should think, would be no dread at all. Can there be any real, substantial, rational fear of nothing? Were you on your deathbed, and in your last moments informed by demonstration or revelation that you would cease to think and to feel at your dissolution, should you be terrified? You might be ashamed of yourself for having lived so long, to bear the proud man's contumely; you might be ashamed of your Maker, and compare Him to a little girl amusing herself, her brothers, and sisters by blowing bubbles in soapsuds; you might compare Him to boys, sporting with crackers and rockets, or to men employed in making more artificial fireworks, or to men and women at fairs and operas, or Sadler's Wells exploits; or to politicians, in their intrigues; or to heroes, in their butcheries; or to Popes, in their devilisms. But what should you fear? Nothing. *Emori nolo; sed me mortuum esse nihil æstimo.*

To return to Priestley — you could make a more luminous book than his upon the "Doctrines of Heathen Philosophers, compared with those of Revelation." Why has he not given us a more satisfactory account of the Pythagorean philosophy and theology? He barely names Ocellus, who lived long before Plato. His treatise of kings and monarchy has been destroyed, I conjecture, by Platonic philosophers, Platonic Jews or Christians, or by fraudulent republicans or despots. His treatise of the universe has been preserved. He labors to prove the eternity of the world. The Marquis D'Argens translated it in all its noble simplicity. The Abbé Batteux has given another translation. D'Argens not only explains the text, but sheds more light upon the ancient systems. His remarks are so many treatises, which develop the concatenation of ancient opinions. The most essential ideas of the theology, of the physics, and of the morality of the ancients are clearly explained, and their different doctrines compared with one another, and with the

modern discoveries. I wish I owned this book, and one hundred thousand more that I want every day, now when I am almost incapable of making any use of them. No doubt, he informs us that Pythagoras was a great traveller.

Priestley barely mentions Timæus; but it does not appear that he had read him. Why has he not given us an account of him and his book? He was before Plato, and gave him the idea of his Timæus, and much more of his philosophy. After his master, he maintained the existence of matter; that matter was capable of receiving all sorts of forms; that a moving power agitates all the parts of it, and that an intelligence directed the moving power; that this intelligence produced a regular and harmonious world. The intelligence had seen a plan, an IDEA (logos), in conformity to which it wrought, and without which it would not have known what it was about, nor what it wanted to do. This plan was the idea, image, or model, which had represented to the Supreme Intelligence the world before it existed, which had directed it in its action upon the moving power, and which it contemplated in forming the elements, the bodies, and the world. This model was distinguished from the intelligence which produced the world, as the architect is from his plans. He divided the productive cause of the world into a spirit, which directed the moving force, and into an image, which determined it in the choice of the directions which it gave to the moving force, and the forms which it gave to matter.

I wonder that Priestley has overlooked this, because it is the same philosophy with Plato's, and would have shown that the Pythagorean, as well as the Platonic philosophers, probably concurred in the fabrication of the Christian Trinity. Priestley mentions the name of Archytas, but does not appear to have read him, though he was a successor of Pythagoras, and a great mathematician, a great statesman, and a great general. John Gram, a learned and honorable Dane, has given a handsome edition of his works, with a Latin translation, and an ample account of his life and writings. Zaleucus, the legislator of Locris, and Charondas of Sybaris, were disciples of Pythagoras, and both celebrated to immortality for the wisdom of their laws, five hundred years before Christ. Why are those laws lost? I say, the spirit of party has destroyed them; civil, poli-

tical, and ecclesiastical bigotry. Despotical, monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical fury, have all been employed in this work of destruction of every thing that could give us true light, and a clear insight of antiquity. For every one of these parties, when possessed of power, or when they have been undermost, and struggling to get uppermost, has been equally prone to every species of fraud and violence and usurpation. Why has not Priestley mentioned these legislators? The preamble to the laws of Zaleucus, which is all that remains, is as orthodox Christian theology as Priestley's, and Christian benevolence and forgiveness of injuries almost as clearly expressed.

Priestley ought to have done impartial justice to philosophy and philosophers. Philosophy, which is the result of reason, is the first, the original revelation of the Creator to his creature, man. When this revelation is clear and certain, by intuition or necessary inductions, no subsequent revelation, supported by prophecies or miracles, can supersede it. Philosophy is not only the love of wisdom, but the science of the universe and its cause. There is, there was, and there will be but one master of philosophy in the universe. Portions of it, in different degrees, are revealed to creatures. Philosophy looks with an impartial eye on all terrestrial religions. I have examined all, as well as my narrow sphere, my straitened means, and my busy life would allow me; and the result is, that the Bible is the best book in the world. It contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries I have seen; and such parts of it as I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy, I postpone for future investigation. Priestley ought to have given us a sketch of the religion and morals of Zoroaster, of Sanchoniathon, of Confucius, and all the founders of religions before Christ, whose superiority would, from such a comparison, have appeared the more transcendent. Priestley ought to have told us that Pythagoras passed twenty years in his travels in India, in Egypt, in Chaldea, perhaps in Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon. He ought to have told us, that in India he conversed with the Brahmins, and read the Shasta, five thousand years old, written in the language of the sacred Sanscrit, with the elegance and sentiments of Plato. Where is to be found theology more orthodox, or philosophy more profound, than in the introduction to the Shasta? "God is one, creator of all,

universal sphere, without beginning, without end. God governs all the creation by a general providence, resulting from his eternal designs. Search not the essence and the nature of the Eternal, who is one; your research will be vain and presumptuous. It is enough, that, day by day and night by night, you adore his power, his wisdom, and his goodness, in his works. The Eternal willed, in the fulness of time, to communicate of his essence and of his splendor, to beings capable of perceiving it. They as yet existed not. The Eternal willed, and they were. He created Birma, Vitsnow, and Sib." These doctrines, sublime, if ever there were any sublime, Pythagoras learned in India, and taught them to Zaleucus and his other disciples. He there learned also his metempsychosis; but this never was popular, never made much progress in Greece or Italy, or any other country besides India and Tartary, the region of the grand immortal Lama. And how does this differ from the possessions of demons in Greece and Rome, from the demon of Socrates, from the worship of cows and crocodiles in Egypt and elsewhere? After migrating through various animals, from elephants to serpents, according to their behavior, souls that, at last, behaved well, became men and women, and then, if they were good, they went to Heaven. All ended in Heaven, if they became virtuous. Who can wonder at the widow of Malabar? Where is the lady who, if her faith were without doubt that she should go to Heaven with her husband on the one hand, or migrate into a toad or a wasp on the other, would not lie down on the pile, and set fire to the fuel? Modifications and disguises of the metempsychosis had crept into Egypt, and Greece, and Rome, and other countries. Have you read Farmer on the demons and possessions of the New Testament?

According to the Shasta, Moisayer, with his companions, rebelled against the Eternal, and were precipitated down to Ondero, the region of darkness.

Do you know any thing of the prophecy of Enoch? Can you give me a comment on the 6th, the 9th, the 14th verses of the epistle of Jude?

If I am not weary of writing, I am sure you must be of reading such incoherent rattle. I will not persecute you so severely in future, if I can help it, so farewell.

THOMAS McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, January, 1814.

In your favor of the 26th November last you say, "that you ventured to say, that about a third of the people of the colonies were against the revolution." It required much reflection before I could fix my opinion on this subject; but on mature deliberation I conclude you are right, and that more than a third of influential characters were against it. The opposition consisted chiefly of the Friends or Quakers, the Menonists, the Protestant Episcopalians, — whose clergy received salaries from the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, — and from the officers of the crown and proprietors of provinces, with their connections, — adding the timid and those who believed the colonies would be conquered, and that, of course, they would be safe in their persons and property from such conduct, and also have a probability of obtaining office and distinction, — and also the discontented and capricious of all grades.

I have not heard the specific sum of money Mr. C. J. Marshall received for his copyright of the Life of Washington, nor have I been able to obtain any certain information concerning it; but if he obtained a sixth part of what you mention, I think he ought to be contented.

During my protracted life, I neither have had leisure or inclination to write a history, and at my present age it is out of the question. It is true I have often been spoken to, and even solicited by a great many of my learned acquaintance, to undertake that of the American Revolution, beginning at the year 1760 or before; among them Dr. Rush, your former correspondent, was not the least anxious.

Though I shall never write a history, I will give you a historical fact respecting the declaration of independence, which may amuse, if not surprise.

On the 1st July, 1776, the question was taken in the committee of the whole of Congress, when Pennsylvania, represented by seven members then present, voted against it — four to three; among the majority were Robert Morris and John Dickinson. Delaware (having only two present, namely, myself and Mr. Read) was divided; all the other States voted in favor of it.

The report was delayed until the 4th, and in the mean time I sent an express for Cæsar Rodney, to Dover, in the county of Kent, in Delaware, at my private expense, whom I met at the State-house door on the 4th of July in his boots; he resided eighty miles from the city, and just arrived as Congress met. The question was taken; Delaware voted in favor of independence; Pennsylvania (there being only five members present, Messrs. Dickinson and Morris absent) voted also for it; Messrs. Willing and Humphreys were against it. Thus the thirteen States were unanimous in favor of independence.[1] Notwithstanding this, in the printed public journal of Congress for 1776, vol. ii., it appears that the declaration of independence was declared on the 4th of July, 1776, by the gentlemen whose names are there inserted; whereas no person signed it on that day, and among the names there inserted, one gentleman, namely George Read, was not in favor of it; and seven were not in Congress on that day, namely Messrs. Morris, Rush, Clymer, Smith, Taylor, and Ross, all of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Thornton, of New Hampshire; nor were the six gentlemen last named, members of Congress on the 4th of July. The five for Pennsylvania were appointed delegates by the convention of that State on the 20th July, and Mr. Thornton took his seat in Congress for the first time on the 4th November following; when the names of Henry Wisner, of New York, and Thomas M'Kean, of Delaware, are not printed as subscribers, though both were present in Congress on the 4th of July and voted for independence.

Here false colors are certainly hung out; there is culpability somewhere. What I have heard as an explanation is as follows. When the declaration was voted, it was ordered to be engrossed on parchment and then signed, and that a few days afterwards a resolution was entered on the secret journal, that no person should have a seat in Congress during that year until he should have signed the declaration of independence. After the 4th of July I was not in Congress for several months, hav-

[1] This account is not quite accurate. The writer has confounded the question on the motion to declare, and that on the form of the declaration. The first was taken on the 2d of July. The second was adopted on the 4th. See Mr. Jefferson's clear statement rectifying this error, in his letter to S. A. Wells, in Randolph's edition, vol. i. p. 98.

ing marched with a regiment of associators, as colonel, to support General Washington, until the flying camp of ten thousand men was completed. When the associators were discharged, I returned to Philadelphia, took my seat in Congress, and signed my name to the declaration on parchment. This transaction should be truly stated, and the then secret journal should be made public. In the manuscript journal, Mr. Pickering, then Secretary of State, and myself, saw a *printed half sheet* of paper, with the names of the members afterwards in the printed journals stitched in. We examined the parchment, where my name is signed in my own handwriting.

A glimmering of peace appears in the horizon; may it be realized; but every preparation should be made for a continuance of the war. When the British arms have been successful, I have never found their rulers or ministers otherwise than haughty, rude, imperious, nay, insolent. They and their allies have this year been successful both in the north and south of Europe.

My sight fades very fast, though my writing may not discover it. God bless you. Your friend,

Tho's McKean.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 14 March,[1] 1814.

I was sitting, nibbing my pen and brushing my faculties, to write a polite letter of thanks to Mr. Counsellor Barton, for his valuable Memoir of Dr. Rittenhouse, though I could not account for his sending it to me, when I received your favor of January 24th. I now most cordially indorse my thanks over to you. The book is in the modern American style, an able imitation of Marshall's Washington, though far more entertaining and instructive, a Washington mausoleum, an Egyptian pyramid. I shall never read it, any more than Taylor's Aristocracy. Mrs. Adams reads it with great delight, and reads to me what she finds interesting, and that is, indeed, the whole book. I have not time to hear it all.

[1] This letter was commenced in February, and bears the date of that month in the very imperfect copy of it which remains. But from Mr. Jefferson's acknowledgment of the receipt, the actual date has been obtained.

Rittenhouse was a virtuous and amiable man; an exquisite mechanician, master of the astronomy known in his time, an expert mathematician, a patient calculator of numbers. But we have had a Winthrop, an Andrew Oliver, a Willard, a Webber, his equals, and we have a Bowditch, his superior, in all these particulars, except the mechanism. But you know Philadelphia is the heart, the sensorium, the pineal gland of the United States. In politics, Rittenhouse was good, simple, ignorant, well-meaning, Franklinian, democrat, totally ignorant of the world, as an anchorite, an honest dupe of the French revolution, a mere instrument of Jonathan Sergeant, Dr. Hutchinson, Genet, and Mifflin. I give him all the credit of his planetarium. The improvement of the orrery to the planetarium was an easy, natural thought, and nothing was wanting but calculations of orbits, distances, and periods of revolutions, all of which were made to his hands long before he existed. Patience, perseverance, and sleight of hand, is his undoubted merit and praise.

I had heard Taylor in Senate, till his style was so familiar to me, that I had not read three pages before I suspected the author. I wrote a letter to him, and he candidly acknowledged that the six hundred and fifty pages were sent me with his consent. I wait with impatience for the publication and annunciation of the work. Arator ought not to have been adulterated with politics; but his precept, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost," is of inestimable value in agriculture and horticulture. Every weed, cob, husk, stalk, ought to be saved for manure.

Your researches in the laws of England, establishing Christianity as the law of the land, and part of the common law, are curious and very important. Questions without number will arise in this country. Religious controversies and ecclesiastical contests are as common, and will be as sharp as any in civil politics, foreign or domestic. In what sense and to what extent the Bible is law, may give rise to as many doubts and quarrels as any civil, political, military, or maritime laws, and will intermix with them all to irritate faction of every sort. I dare not look beyond my nose into futurity. Our money, our commerce, our religion, our national and state constitutions, even our arts and sciences, are so many seed-plots of division, faction, sedi-

tion, and rebellion. Every thing is transmuted into an instrument of electioneering. Election is the Grand Brama, the immortal Lama, I had almost said the Juggernaut; for wives are almost ready to burn upon the pile, and children to be thrown under the wheel.

You will perceive, by these figures, that I have been looking into Oriental history and Hindoo religion. I have read voyages and travels, and every thing I could collect. Not the least is Priestley's "Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations," a work of great labor, and not less haste. I thank him for the labor, and forgive, though I lament, the hurry. You would be fatigued to read, and I, just recruiting a little from a longer confinement and indisposition than I have had for thirty years, have not strength to write many observations. But I have been disappointed in the principal points of my curiosity.

I am disappointed, —

1. By finding that no just comparison can be made, because the original Shasta and the original Vedas are not obtained, or, if obtained, not yet.

2. In not finding such morsels of the sacred books as have been translated and published, which are more honorable to the original Hindoo religion than any thing he has quoted.

3. In the history of the rebellion of innumerable hosts of angels in heaven against the Supreme Being, who, after some thousands of years of war, conquered them, and hurled them down to the region of total darkness, where they suffered a part of the punishment of their crime, and then were mercifully released from prison, permitted to ascend to earth, and migrate into all sorts of animals, reptiles, birds, beasts, and men, according to their rank and character, and even into vegetables and minerals, there to serve on probation. If they passed without reproach their several gradations, they were permitted to become cows and men. If, as men, they behaved well, that is, to the satisfaction of the priests, they were restored to their original rank and bliss in heaven.

4. In not finding the Trinity of Pythagoras and Plato; their contempt of matter, flesh, and blood; their almost adoration of fire and water; their metempsychosis, and even the prohibition of beans, so evidently derived from India.

5. In not finding the prophecy of Enoch deduced from India, in which the fallen angels make such a figure.

But you are weary. Priestley has proved the superiority of the Hebrews to the Hindoos, as they appear in the Gentoo laws and institutions of Menu, but the comparison remains to be made with the Shasta.

In his remarks on M. Dupuis, p. 342, Priestley says: "the history of the fallen angels is another circumstance on which M. Dupuis lays much stress." According to the Christians, he says, vol. i. p. 336, "there was, from the beginning, a division among the angels; some remaining faithful to the light, and others taking the part of darkness," &c. "But this supposed history is not found in the Scriptures. It has only been inferred from a wrong interpretation of one passage in the second epistle of Peter, and a corresponding one in that of Jude, as has been shown by judicious writers. That there is such a person as the devil, is no part of my faith, nor that of many other Christians; nor am I sure that it was the belief of any of the Christian writers. Neither do I believe the doctrine of demoniacal possessions, whether it was believed by the sacred writers or not; and, yet my belief in these articles does not affect my faith in the great facts of which the Evangelists were eye and ear witnesses. They might not be competent judges in the one case, though perfectly so with respect to the other."

I will ask Priestley, when I see him, do you believe those passages in Peter and Jude to be interpolations? If so, by whom made, and when, and where, and for what end? Was it to support or found the doctrine of the fall of man, original sin, the universal corruption, depravation, and guilt of human nature and mankind, and the subsequent incarnation of God to make atonement and redemption? Or, do you think that Peter and Jude believed the book of Enoch to have been written by the seventh from Adam, and one of the sacred canonical books of the Hebrew prophets? Peter, 2d epistle, chapter 2, verse 4, says: "for if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Jude, verse 6th, says: "and the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Verse 14th, "And Enoch also,

the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all," &c. Priestley says, "a wrong interpretation has been given to the texts." I wish he had favored us with his right interpretation of them.

In another place, p. 326, Priestley says, "there is no circumstance of which M. Dupuis avails himself so much, or repeats so often, both with respect to the Jewish and Christian religions, as the history of the *fall of man*, in the beginning of the book of Genesis. I believe with him, and have maintained in my writings, that this history is either an allegory, or founded on uncertain tradition; that it is a hypothesis to account for the origin of evil, adopted by Moses, which, by no means, accounts for the facts."

March 3. So far was written almost a month ago; but sickness has prevented progress. I had much to say about this work. I shall never be a disciple of Priestley. He is as absurd, inconsistent, credulous, and incomprehensible as Athanasius. Read his letter to the Jews in this volume. Could a rational creature write it? Aye! such rational creatures as Rochefoucauld and Condorcet and John Taylor, in politics, and Towerses, Jurieus, and French prophets, in theology.

Priestley's account of the philosophy and religion of India appears to me to be much such a work as a man of busy research would produce, who should undertake to describe Christianity from the sixth to the twelfth century, when a deluge of wonders overflowed the world; when miracles were performed and proclaimed from every convent and monastery, hospital, church-yard, mountain, valley, cave, and cupola.

There is a work which I wish I possessed. It has never crossed the Atlantic. It is entitled Acta Sanctorum, in forty-seven volumes in folio.[1] It contains the lives of the saints. It was compiled in the beginning of the sixteenth century by Bollandus, Henschenius, and Papebroch. What would I give to possess, in one immense map, one stupendous draught, all the legends, true, doubtful, and false? These Bollandists dared to discuss some of the facts, and to hint that some of them were

[1] Fifty-four volumes; and it is still in course of publication. Two volumes have lately been issued under the auspices of the Belgian government.

doubtful. *E. g.* Papebroch doubted the antiquity of the Carmelites from Elias; and whether the face of Jesus Christ was painted on the handkerchief of St. Veronique; and whether the prepuce of the Savior of the world, which was shown in the church at Antwerp, could be proved to be genuine. For these bold skepticisms, he was libelled in pamphlets, and denounced to the Pope and the inquisition in Spain. The inquisition condemned him; but the Pope, not daring to condemn or acquit him, prohibited all writings *pro* and *con.* But, as the physicians cure one disease by exciting another, as a fever by a salivation, this bull was produced by a new claim. The brothers of the Order of Charity asserted a descent from Abraham nine hundred years anterior to the Carmelites.

A philosopher, who should write a description of Christianism from the Bollandistic saints of the sixth or tenth century, would probably produce a work tolerably parallel to Priestley's upon the Hindoos.

TO JOHN TAYLOR.

Quincy, 9 April, 1814.

I have received from Mr. John M. Carter your "Inquiry" in 656 pages, neatly bound. If I had any rational expectation, in my seventy-ninth year, of life, health, unclouded eyes, and unparalyzed fingers for twenty years to come, I would cheerfully engage with you in an analytical investigation of all those subjects which, you say, have amused some of your leisure hours for twenty years past.

The field is vast. It comprehends the first and the last philosophy; the end of man in all his existence. In this letter, I shall confine myself to one topic. In your 519th page, and several that follow, you have taken notice of something of my composition. But I cannot understand it. I suspect, by some accident or other, you have confounded together a little pamphlet with a letter that was never printed. Let me give you an unvarnished explanation, according to my best recollection. In January, 1776, six months before the declaration of independence, Mr. Wythe, of Virginia, passed an evening with me, at

my chambers In the course of conversation upon the necessity of independence, Mr. Wythe, observing that the greatest obstacle, in the way of a declaration of it, was the difficulty of agreeing upon a government for our future regulation, I replied that each colony should form a government for itself, as a free and independent State. "Well," said Mr. Wythe, "what plan would you institute or advise for any one of the States?" My answer was, "It is a thing I have not thought much of, but I will give you the first ideas that occur to me;" and I went on to explain to him off-hand and in short-hand my first thoughts. Mr. Wythe appeared to think more of them than I did, and requested me to put down in writing what I had then said. I agreed, and, accordingly, that night and the next morning wrote it, and sent it in a letter to him. This letter he sent to R. H. Lee, who came and asked my leave to print it. I said it was not fit to be printed, nor worth printing; but, if he thought otherwise, he might, provided he would suppress my name. He went accordingly to Dunlap, and had it printed under the title of "Thoughts on Government, in a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend." Thus much for the printed pamphlet. Now for the unprinted letter. Some time in the ensuing spring, the delegates from North Carolina called upon me with a vote of the legislature of their State, instructing them to apply to me for advice concerning a form of government to be instituted in that State. I blushed, to be sure, to find that my name had reached so far as North Carolina; and still more at such an unexpected honor from so respectable an assembly.[1]

Overwhelmed, however, as I was at that period, night and day, with business in Congress and on committees, I found moments to write a letter, perhaps as long as that to Mr. Wythe, and containing nearly the same outlines. In what points the two letters agree or differ, I know not, for I kept no copy, and have never seen or heard of it since, till your volume revived

[1] There can be no doubt that there were three separate letters of Mr. Adams in circulation, each of them embodying the same general idea, with more or less amplification. One of them is the printed pamphlet alluded to in the text; the second is that published by Mr. Taylor, which gave rise to this letter, and which that gentleman had obtained from Mr. John Penn, of North Carolina; and still a third has been found in North Carolina, a copy of which was transmitted to Mr. J. Q. Adams, a few years before his decease, by Mr. Charles Philips, Secretary of the Historical Society of the University of North Carolina.

the recollection of it. I suspect you have never seen either of the letters, but have taken extracts from them both, which may have been printed in newspapers, and blended them together; for certainly there was not a word about North Carolina in the printed letter to Mr. Wythe.

I may possibly hear hereafter of another letter I wrote to Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, of New Jersey, in answer to an earnest solicitation from him to give him my sentiments of a proper form of government for that State. I took no copy, and have not heard of it for thirty-five or thirty-six years. Let it come to light, however. I have no wish to conceal any thing in any of these letters, though there may be many things I should not now approve. The experience of thirty-eight years alters many views. *Opinionum commenta delet dies.*

As you seem to have found some amusement in some of my scribbles, I beg your acceptance of another morsel, the Discourses on Davila, which you may call the fourth volume of the Defence of the Constitutions of the United States. I am, Sir, very respectfully, and with very friendly dispositions, &c.

TO RICHARD RUSH.

Quincy, 30 May, 1814.

Your favor of the 20th has given me great pleasure, because it informs me that you are happy. Your visit to Philadelphia must have been delightful, and the company of your excellent surviving parent on your return, and her domestication with you and the fair enchantress, must be more so. This family intercourse cannot be less pleasing to your mother. It will preserve her health and prolong her life, much more important to you, your brothers and sisters, than I dare say she esteems it for herself.

A stock of new law books, next to the renovation of social, domestic, and local feelings, was an object worthy of you. New law books, I hope, improve upon the old, but ought not to supersede them all. I fear you would laugh, if I should say that the Corpus Juris, Vinnius, and Cujacius, ought not to be

wholly superseded by Hale and Coke, Holt and Mansfield. No, nor by Parsons, Ingersoll, or Marshall.

Why are we "astonished at the events in Europe"? They are every day occurrences in history. That heroes come to bad ends, has been the experience of all ages. Alexander, Cæsar, Charles XII., and Oliver Cromwell, and millions of others, as wild and delirious as they, have all come to a like catastrophe. Read the histories of our missionary societies. Is there not the same enthusiasm, the same heroism? I scarcely dare to say what I know, that many a kept mistress has dared for her lover as great hazards and sufferings, as any of these sublime heroes, temporal or spiritual. While we know that enthusiasm produces the most sublime and beautiful actions and events in human life, at times, we should always be jealous of it, watch its movements, and be prepared to escape, avoid, or resist its deleterious effects.

Alas! the Massachusetts triumvirate is broken! Judge Paine is no more! An old German doctor, Turner, when I was a little boy, asked me the age of my father. When I told him as well as I knew, "Alas!" said the old gentleman, "your father's age is so near my own, that, when one dies of old age, the other may quake for fear." If death were terrible to Gerry or to me, the death of Paine might make us "quake for fear."

"What would New England say?"[1] She will say as she ought to say, and as she always has said on like occasions, "I have been cheated, deceived, deluded. I thought Britain our friend, but find I have been mistaken." The "intimations" you have had, have been made to me. The tories have "intimated" to me in various secret, confidential, round-about ways, these mighty bugbears. "Mr. Adams saved the fisheries once I hope his son will save them a second time. We have no confidence in Gallatin, Clay, Russell, or even Bayard; we believe they would all sacrifice the fisheries for Canada or even for peace." My invariable answer has been, "You deceive yourselves with imaginary fears. You know that the men Bayard, Russell, Clay, and even Gallatin would cede the fee simple of the United States, as soon as they would the fisheries."

[1] Mr. Rush had asked this question: —

"What, for example, would New England say to Great Britain talking about excluding us from trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope, from the West Indies, and from the Newfoundland fisheries?"

Did you ever know a man, or nation, a coalition or alliance that could bear success, victory, and prosperity? Victory has destroyed Napoleon. Victory is in danger of destroying the allies. If not, and the Bourbons are restored, what is their prospect? The Stuarts were restored; for how long a time? and how many plots? how many Sidneys, Russells, Staffords, were beheaded? I know by experience that the swell is as dangerous as the storm. We must learn to know ourselves, to esteem ourselves, to respect ourselves, to confide in ourselves under heaven alone. We must hold Europe at arm's length, do them justice, treat them with civility, and set their envy, jealousy, malice, retaliation, and revenge at defiance.

The lakes, the lakes, the lakes! shocking, indeed, that we have not the command of the lakes! But I could convince you that it is still more shocking that we have not the command of the ocean, or at least an independent power upon the ocean. But this would lead too far at present. If you have a curiosity upon this subject, I will give you a few hints in a future letter.

TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

Quincy, 15 July, 1814.

. . . . . .

What brain could ever have conceived or suspected Samuel Barrett, Esquire, to have been the author of the "Group"?[1] The bishop had neither the natural genius nor the acquired talents, the knowledge of characters, nor the political principles, sentiments, or feelings that could have dictated that pungent drama. His worthy brother, the major, might have been as rationally suspected.

I could take my Bible oath to two propositions, — 1st, that

[1] "My next question, Sir, you may deem impertinent. Do you remember who was the author of a little pamphlet entitled *The Group?* To your hand it was committed by the writer. You brought it forward to the public eye. I will therefore give you my reason for naming it now. A friend of mine, who lately visited the Athenæum, saw it among a bundle of pamphlets, with a high encomium of the author, who, he asserted, was Mr. Samuel Barrett. You can, if you please, give a written testimony contradictory of the false assertion." *Extract from Mrs. Warren's letter.*

Bishop Barrett, in my opinion, was one of the last literary characters in the world who ought to have been suspected to have written the "Group." 2d. That there was but one person in the world, male or female, who could at that time, in my opinion, have written it; and that person was Madam Mercy Warren, the historical, philosophical, poetical, and satirical consort of the then Colonel, since General, James Warren of Plymouth, sister of the great, but forgotten, James Otis.

This Group has mortified and confounded me. Since the receipt of your letter, I went to Boston and demanded of my nephew and quondam secretary,[1] the volume. He says he obtained it, with other pamphlets, from Governor Adams's collection, with the strange certificate in manuscript, in the handwriting, as he thinks, of Jo Dennie, the editor of the Port Folio.[2] Jo Dennie in Sam. Adams's library is as great an oddity as Sam. Barrett, author of the Group. But this is not the worst. The Group has convinced me of the decay of my memory more than any thing that has yet occurred. Hazelrod, Judge Meagre, Hateall, Beau Trumps, François, Dupe, and Spendall, I can comprehend; but Mushroom, Dick, Sapling, Crowbar, Fribble, Batteau, and Collateralis have escaped my recollection. The Group was printed in 1775. The "cawing cormorants" in the 16th page, and Novanglus and Massachusettensis in the 20th page, prove that it was written during the flickering between those two scribblers; but as no allusion is found in it to the skirmishes of Concord or Lexington, it must have been written

[1] W. S. Shaw, the librarian of the Boston Athenæum.

[2] This certificate yet remains attached to the volume at the Athenæum, but another has been added, correcting the mistake. The Group has little merit as a literary work, but it will always be a curiosity on other accounts. Mr. Adams afterwards wrote with his own hand in the same copy, the names of the persons designed to be represented. And another copy in the same library has the names written in the hand of Norton Quincy, to whom it belonged. They are as follows:

Hazelrod,	Peter Oliver,	Humbug,	John Erving,
Meagre,	Foster Hutchinson,	Spendall,	Wm. Pepperell,
Hateall,	Timothy Ruggles,	Mushroom,	Morrow,
Beau Trumps,	Leonard,	Crowbar,	Edson,
Dick,	Leehmere,	Dupe,	Flucker,
Sapling,	N. R. Thomas,	Fribble,	Harrison Gray,
François,	Boutineau,	Collateralis,	Brown,
Batteau,	Loring.		

Harrison Gray was unquestionably intended, although the association of ideas prompted the accidental addition in the book, of the name of his grandson, then a child.

and printed before the 19th of April, 1775. Now, I cannot recollect to have been in Plymouth since the spring of 1774. Help! O help my memory.

France is humbled and Napoleon is banished; but the tyrant, the tyrant of tyrants is not fallen. John Bull still paws, and bellows terrible menaces and defiances.

Sincerely your friend.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 16 July, 1814.

I received this morning your favor of the 5th, and as I can never let a sheet of yours rest, I sit down immediately to acknowledge it.

Whenever Mr. Rives, of whom I have heard nothing, shall arrive, he shall receive all the cordial civilities in my power.

I am sometimes afraid that my machine will not surcease motion soon enough; for I dread nothing so much as "dying at top," and expiring like Dean Swift, a "driveller and a show," or like Sam. Adams, a grief and distress to his family, a weeping, helpless object of compassion for years.

I am bold to say, that neither you nor I will live to see the course which the "wonders of the times" will take. Many years, and perhaps centuries must pass before the current will acquire a settled direction. If the Christian religion, as I understand it, or as you understand it, should maintain its ground, as I believe it will, yet Platonic, Pythagoric, Hindoo, and cabalistical Christianity, which is Catholic Christianity, and which has prevailed for fifteen hundred years, has received a mortal wound, of which the monster must finally die. Yet so strong is his constitution, that he may endure for centuries before he expires. Government has never been much studied by mankind; but their attention has been drawn to it in the latter part of the last century and the beginning of this, more than at any former period, and the vast variety of experiments which have been made of constitutions in America, in France, in Holland, in Geneva, in Switzerland, and even in Spain and South America, can never be forgotten. They will be studied, and their immediate and remote effects and final catastrophes noted. The

result in time will be improvements; and I have no doubt that the horrors we have experienced for the last forty years will ultimately terminate in the advancement of civil and religious liberty, and amelioration in the condition of mankind. For I am a believer in the probable improvability and improvement, the ameliorability and amelioration in human affairs; though I never could understand the doctrine of the perfectibility of the human mind. This has always appeared to me like the philosophy or theology of the Gentoos, namely, that a Brahmin, by certain studies for a certain time pursued, and by certain ceremonies a certain number of times repeated, becomes omniscient and almighty.

Our hopes, however, of sudden tranquillity ought not to be too sanguine. Fanaticism and superstition will still be selfish, subtle, intriguing, and, at times, furious. Despotism will still struggle for domination; monarchy will still study to rival nobility in popularity; aristocracy will continue to envy all above it, and despise and oppress all below it; democracy will envy all, contend with all, endeavor to pull down all, and when by chance it happens to get the upper hand for a short time, it will be revengeful, bloody, and cruel. These and other elements of fanaticism and anarchy will yet for a long time continue a fermentation, which will excite alarms and require vigilance.

Napoleon is a military fanatic like Achilles, Alexander, Cæsar, Mahomet, Zengis, Kouli, Charles XII. The maxim and principle of all of them was the same.

"Jura negat sibi lata, nihil non arrogat armis."

But is it strict to call him a usurper? Was not his elevation to the empire of France as legitimate and authentic a national act as that of William III. or the house of Hanover to the throne of the three kingdoms? or as the election of Washington to the command of our army or to the chair of State?

Human nature, in no form of it, could bear prosperity. That peculiar tribe of men called conquerors, more remarkably than any other, have been swelled with vanity by a series of victories. Napoleon won so many mighty battles in such quick succession, and for so long a time, that it was no wonder his brain became completely intoxicated, and his enterprises rash, extravagant, and mad.

Though France is humbled, Britain is not; though Bona is banished, a greater tyrant and wider usurper still domineers. John Bull is quite as unfeeling, as unprincipled, more powerful, has shed more blood than Bona. John, by his money, his intrigues and arms, by exciting coalition after coalition against him, made him what he was, and at last what he is. How shall the tyrant of tyrants be brought low? Aye, there's the rub! I still think Bona great, at least as any of his conquerors. "The wonders of his rise and fall" may be seen in the life of King Theodore, or Pascal Paoli, or Rienzi, or Dionysius, or Massaniello, or Jack Cade, or Wat Tyler. The only difference is, that between miniature and full length pictures. The schoolmaster at Corinth was a greater man than the tyrant of Syracuse, upon the principle, that "he who conquers himself is greater than he who takes a city." Though the ferocious roar of the wounded lion may terrify the hunter with the possibility of another dangerous leap, Bona was shot dead at once by France. He could no longer roar or struggle, growl or paw, he could only gasp his grin of death; I wish that France may not still regret him. But these are speculations in the clouds. I agree with you that the milk of human kindness in the Bourbons is safer for mankind than the fierce ambition of Napoleon.

The autocrator appears in an imposing light. Fifty years ago, English writers held up terrible consequences from "thawing out the monstrous northern snake." If Cossacs and Tartars, and Goths and Vandals, and Huns and Ripuarians should get a taste of European sweets, what may happen? Could Wellingtons or Bonapartes resist them? The greatest trait of sagacity that Alexander has yet exhibited to the world, is his courtship to the United States. But whether this is a mature, well digested policy, or only a transient gleam of thought, still remains to be explained and proved by time.

The refractory sister will not give up the fisheries. Not a man here dares to hint at so base a thought.

I am very glad you have seriously read Plato, and still more rejoiced to find that your reflections upon him so perfectly harmonize with mine. Some thirty years ago, I took upon me the severe task of going through all his works. With the help of two Latin translations and one English and one French translation, and comparing some of the most remarkable passages

with the Greek, I labored through the tedious toil. My disappointment was very great, my astonishment was greater, and my disgust was shocking. Two things only did I learn from him. First, that Franklin's ideas of exempting husbandmen and mariners, &c., from the depredations of war, were borrowed from him; and second, that sneezing is a cure for the hiccough. Accordingly, I have cured myself and all my friends of that provoking disorder, for thirty years, with a pinch of snuff.

Some parts of some of his dialogues are entertaining, like the writings of Rousseau; but his Laws and his Republic, from which I expected most, disappointed me most. I could scarcely exclude the suspicion, that he intended the latter as a bitter satire upon all republican governments, as Xenophon undoubtedly designed by his essay on democracy to ridicule that species of republic. In a late letter to the learned and ingenious Mr. Taylor, of Hazelwood, I suggested to him the project of writing a novel, in which the hero should be sent on his travels through Plato's republic, and all his adventures, with his observations on the principles and opinions, the arts and sciences, the manners, customs, and habits of the citizens, should be recorded. Nothing can be conceived more destructive of human happiness, more infallibly contrived to transform men and women into brutes, yahoos, or demons, than a community of wives and property. Yet, in what are the writings of Rousseau and Helvetius wiser than those of Plato? "The man who first fenced a tobacco yard, and said, 'this is mine,' ought instantly to have been put to death," says Rousseau. "The man who first pronounced the barbarous word *Dieu*, ought to have been immediately destroyed," says Diderot. In short, philosophers, ancient and modern, appear to me as mad as Hindoos, Mahometans, and Christians. No doubt they would all think me mad, and for any thing I know, this globe may be the Bedlam, *le Bicêtre* of the universe.

After all, as long as property exists, it will accumulate in individuals and families. As long as marriage exists, knowledge, property, and influence will accumulate in families. Your and our equal partition of intestate estates, instead of preventing, will in time augment the evil, if it is one. The French revolutionists saw this, and were so far consistent. When they burned pedigrees and genealogical trees, they annihilated, as far as they

could, marriages, knowing that marriage, among a thousand other things, was an infallible source of aristocracy. I repeat it, so sure as the idea and the existence of *property* is admitted and established in society, accumulations of it will be made, — the snowball will grow as it rolls.

Cicero was educated in the groves of Academus, where the name and memory of Plato were idolized to such a degree, that if he had wholly renounced the prejudices of his education, his reputation would have been lessened, if not injured and ruined. In his two volumes of Discourses on government, we may presume that he fully examined Plato's Laws and Republic, as well as Aristotle's writings on government. But these have been carefully destroyed, not improbably with the general consent of philosophers, politicians, and priests. The loss is as much to be regretted as that of any production of antiquity.

Nothing seizes the attention of the staring animal so surely as paradox, riddle, mystery, invention, discovery, wonder, temerity.

Plato, and his disciples from the fourth century Christians to Rousseau and Tom Paine, have been fully sensible of this weakness in mankind, and have too successfully grounded upon it their pretensions to fame. I might, indeed, have mentioned Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Turgot, Helvetius, Diderot, Condorcet, Buffon, De la Lande, and fifty others, all a little cracked.

> "Be to their faults a little blind,
> To their virtues ever kind."

Education! oh, education! the greatest grief of my heart, and the greatest affliction of my life! To my mortification I must confess that I have never closely thought or deliberately reflected upon the subject, which never occurs to me now without producing a deep sigh, a heavy groan, and sometimes tears. My cruel destiny separated me from my children almost continually from their birth to their manhood. I was compelled to leave them to the ordinary routine of reading, writing, and Latin school, academy, and college. John alone was much with me, and he, but occasionally.

If I venture to give you my thoughts at all, they must be very crude. I have turned over Locke, Milton, Condillac, Rous-

seau, and even Miss Edgeworth, as a bird flies through the air. The "Preceptor" I have thought a good book. Grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics, mathematics, cannot be neglected. Classics, in spite of our friend Rush, I must think indispensable. Natural history, mechanics, and experimental philosophy, chemistry, &c., at least their rudiments, cannot be forgotten. Geography, astronomy, and even history and chronology, though I am myself afflicted with a kind of pyrrhonism in the two latter, I presume cannot be omitted. Theology I would leave to Ray, Durham, Nieuwentyt, and Paley, rather than to Luther, Zinzendorf, Swedenborg, Wesley, or Whitefield, or Thomas Aquinas, or Wollebius. Metaphysics I would leave in the clouds with the materialists and spiritualists, with Leibnitz, Berkeley, Priestley, and Edwards, and, I might add, Hume and Reed. Or, if permitted to be read, it should be with romances and novels. What shall I say of music, drawing, fencing, dancing, and gymnastic exercises? What of languages, oriental or occidental? Of French, Italian, German, or Russian, of Sanscrit or of Chinese? The task you have prescribed to me of grouping these sciences or arts, under professors, within the views of an enlightened economy, is far beyond my forces. Loose, indeed, and undigested must be all the hints I can note.

Might grammar, logic, and rhetoric be under one professor? Might mathematics, mechanics, natural philosophy be under another? Geography and astronomy under a third? Laws and government, history and chronology, under a fourth? Classics might require a fifth. Condillac's course of study has excellent parts; among many systems of mathematics, English, French and American, there is none preferable to Bezout's course; La Harpe's Course of Literature is very valuable. But I am ashamed to add any thing more to the broken innuenda. Accept assurances of continued friendship.

TO JAMES MADISON.

Quincy, 28 November, 1814.

When my son departed for Russia, I enjoined it upon him to write nothing to me, which he was not willing should be pub-

lished in French and English newspapers. He has very scrupulously observed the rule. I have been equally reserved in my letters to him; but the principle on both sides has been to me a cruel privation, for his correspondence when absent, and his conversation when present, have been a principal enjoyment of my life. In the inclosed letter he has ventured to deviate, and has assigned his reason for it. I think, however, that I ought to communicate it to you.

I have no papers, that I recollect, that can be of any service to him. I published in the Boston Patriot all I recollect of the negotiations for peace in 1782 and 1783. But I have no copy of that publication in manuscript or print, and I had hoped never to see or hear of it again.

All I can say is, that I would continue this war forever, rather than surrender one acre of our territory, one iota of the fisheries, as established by the third article of the treaty of 1783, or one sailor impressed from any merchant ship. I will not, however, say this to my son, though I shall be very much obliged to you, if you will give him orders to the same effect.

It is the decree of Providence, as I believe, that this nation must be purified in the furnace of affliction. You will be so good as to return my letter, and believe me, &c.

TO RUFUS KING.

Quincy, 2 December, 1814.

I am very much obliged to you for the information, melancholy as it is to me, of the death of Mr. Gerry. A friendship of forty years, I have found a rarity, though not a singularity.

I am left alone. While Paine, Gerry, and Lovell lived, there were some that I seemed to know; but now, not one of my contemporaries and colleagues is left. Can there be any deeper damnation in this universe than to be condemned to a long life, in danger, toil, and anxiety; to be rewarded only with abuse, insult, and slander; and to die at seventy, leaving to an amiable wife and nine amiable children nothing for an inheritance but the contempt, hatred, and malice of the world? How much prettier a thing it is to be a disinterested patriot, like

Washington and Franklin, live and die among the hosannas and adorations of the multitude, and leave half a million to one child or to no child! Do you wonder at Tacitus and Quinctilian? I do; but not at the profoundness of their philosophy. I am astonished at the shallowness of it. I am amazed at their vanity and presumption in pretending to judge the government of this all. Their only true philosophy should have been submission and resignation.

JAMES MADISON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Washington, 17 December, 1814.

Your favor of the 28th ultimo was duly received, though with more delay than usually attends the mail. I return the interesting letter from your son, with my thanks for the opportunity of perusing it.

I have caused the archives of the Department of State to be searched, with an eye to what passed during the negotiations for peace on the subject of the fisheries. The search has not furnished a precise answer to the inquiry of Mr. Adams. It appears from one of your letters, referring to the instructions accompanying the commission to make a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, that the original views of Congress did not carry their ultimatum beyond the common right to fish in waters distant three leagues from the British shores. The negotiations, therefore, and not the instructions, if no subsequent change of them took place, have the merit of the terms actually obtained. That other instructions, founded on the resolutions of Congress, issued at subsequent periods, cannot be doubted, though, as yet, they do not appear. But how far they distinguished between the common use of the sea, and the use, then common, also, of the shores, in carrying on the fisheries, I have no recollection.

The view of the discussions at Ghent presented by the private letters of all our ministers there, as well as by their official despatches, leaves no doubt of the policy of the British cabinet so forcibly illustrated by the letter of Mr. Adams to you. Our enemy, knowing that he has peace in his own hands, speculates on the fortune of events. Should these be unfavorable, he can

at any moment, as he supposes, come to our terms. Should they correspond with his hopes, his demands may be insisted on, or even extended. The point to be decided by our ministers is, whether, during the uncertainty of events, a categorical alternative of immediate peace, or a rupture of the negotiation, would not be preferable to a longer acquiescence in the gambling procrastinations of the other party. It may be presumed that they will, before this, have pushed the negotiations to this point.

It is very agreeable to find that the superior ability, which distinguishes the notes of our envoys, extorts commendation from the most obdurate of their political enemies. And we have the further satisfaction to learn, that the cause they are pleading is beginning to overcome the prejudice, which misrepresentations had spread over the continent of Europe against it. The British government is neither inattentive to this approaching revolution in the public opinion there, nor blind to its tendency. If it does not find in it a motive to immediate peace, it will infer the necessity of shortening the war by bringing upon us, the ensuing campaign, what it will consider as a force not to be resisted by us.

It were to be wished that this consideration had more effect in quickening the preparatory measures of Congress. I am unwilling to say how much distress in every branch of our affairs is the fruit of their tardiness; nor would it be necessary to you, who will discern the extent of the evil in the symptoms from which it is to be inferred.

I pray you, Sir, to accept assurances, &c.

JAMES MADISON.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, January, 1815.

Although I have no recollection that I ever met you more than once in society, and that, I presume, was the instance you have recorded, yet I feel as if I was intimately acquainted with you. The want of familiarity between us, I regret, not only because I have known, esteemed, and I may say, loved your family, from an early age, but, especially, because whatever I

have heard or read of your character in life, has given me a respect for your talents and a high esteem for your character.

Having read Mr. Randolph's letter to you, and your answer to him, I shall not question the propriety of your taking so much notice of him.[1] It would give me pleasure to dilate on the various parts of your letter, and mark the many points in which I fully agree with you, as well as the few which are not so clear to me; but I shall confine myself at present to those things which personally relate to myself and my administration. You say, Sir, that "I built upon the sand." And so, indeed, I did. I had no material for a foundation, but a rope of it. The union of the States was at that time nothing better. In this respect I was in a worse situation than Mr. Madison is at this hour.

You are pleased to say, Sir, that "upon the earlier part of my administration you could dilate *con amore*." I believe you, Sir. The addresses, of which Mr. Randolph "defies you to think without a bitter smile," will remain immortal monuments, in proof that one third at least of the people of the United States thought and felt as you did. But, Sir, did you then consider, or have you since considered, that this Mr. Randolph, with two thirds of the people of the United States, then "dilated on that earlier part of my administration," *con odio?*

There is not, Sir, in your masterly letter a more correct or important observation than that of "the unhappy ignorance which exists among the members of this great family, but resident in different sections of it, with regard to the objects and qualities of each other. This ignorance, the offspring of narrow prejudice and illiberality, is now presenting brimful the chalice of envy and hatred, where it should offer nothing but the cup of conciliation and confidence. It sprang from the little intercourse and less knowledge which the people of the then British Provinces possessed of each other antecedently to the American revolution, and instead of being dissipated by an event so hon-

[1] Mr. John Randolph had addressed a letter, dated Philadelphia, 15th December, 1814, through the newspapers, to Mr. James Lloyd, of Massachusetts, deprecating a resort to extreme measures by the federalists of New England. He was answered by Mr. Lloyd in a letter published in the Boston Daily Advertiser, of January 1815. In both letters there were allusions to Mr. Adams, that called forth the series of letters which now follow each other very closely in this volume.

orable to them all, has been cherished and perpetuated for political party purposes, and for the promotion of the sinister views and ambitious projects of a few restless and unprincipled individuals, until the present period."

Of this ignorance, when I went to Congress in 1774, I can assure you, Sir, I had a most painful consciousness in my own bosom. There I had the disappointment to find, that almost every gentleman in that assembly was, in this kind of information, nearly as ignorant as myself; and what was a more cruel mortification than all the rest, the greatest part even of the most intelligent, full of prejudices and jealousies, which I had never before even suspected. Between 1774 and 1797, an interval of twenty-three years, this ignorance was in some measure removed from some minds. But some had retired in disgust, some had gone into the army, some had been turned out for timidity, some had deserted to the enemy, and all the old, steadfast patriots, weary of the service, always irksome in Congress, had retired to their families and States, to be made governors, judges, marshals, collectors, &c., &c. So that in 1797, there was not an individual in the House of Representatives, in the Senate, or in either of the executive departments of government, who had been in the national controversy from the beginning. Mr. Jefferson himself, the Vice-President, the oldest in service of them all, was but a young and a new man in comparison with the earliest conductors of the cause of the country, the real founders and legitimate fathers of the American republic. The most of them had been but a very few years in public business, and a large proportion of these were of a party which had been opposed to the revolution, at least in the beginning of it. If I were called to calculate the divisions among the people of America, as Mr. Burke did those of the people of England, I should say that full one third were averse to the revolution. These, retaining that overweening fondness, in which they had been educated, for the English, could not cordially like the French; indeed, they most heartily detested them. An opposite third conceived a hatred of the English, and gave themselves up to an enthusiastic gratitude to France. The middle third, composed principally of the yeomanry, the soundest part of the nation, and always averse to war, were rather lukewarm both to England and France; and sometimes strag-

glers from them, and sometimes the whole body, united with the first or the last third, according to circumstances.

The depredations of France upon our commerce, and her insolence to our ambassadors, and even to the government, united, though for a short time, with infinite reluctance, the second third with the first, and produced that burst of applause to the administration, in which you concurred, though it gave much offence to Mr. Randolph. Nor to him alone, I assure you. It appeared to me then, and has appeared ever since, that a great majority of the people of the United States, and even in New England, in their hearts disapproved of those addresses as much as they did of those pompous escorts, public dinners, and childish festivals, which tormented me much more than they did them. They thought, that such things led to monarchy and aristocracy as well as to a long and interminable war, a war with France, our sister republic; and a war with any body, must bring expenses and taxes. Those hosannas, moreover, excited envy and bitter jealousy in many breasts in the first class, whose names I will not mention at present.

National defence is one of the cardinal duties of a statesman. On this head I recollect nothing with which to reproach myself. The subject has always been near my heart. The delightful imaginations of universal and perpetual peace have often amused, but have never been credited by me. From the year 1755 to this day, almost three score years, I have thought a naval force the most natural, safe, efficacious, and economical bulwark for this country. In 1775, I labored day and night to lay the foundation of a navy, and in the four last years of the last century I hesitated at no expense to purchase navy yards, to collect timber to build ships, and spared no pains to select officers. And what was the effect? No part of my administration was so unpopular, not only in the western, the southern, and middle States, but in all New England, and, strange to tell, even in Marblehead, Salem, Newburyport, and Boston. The little army, the fortifications, the manufactures of arms and ammunition, were all unpopular. They were the reign of terror. They were to introduce monarchy and aristocracy. John Adams and John Jay were sold to Great Britain.

In this critical state of things, when Virginia and Kentucky, too nearly in unison with the other southern and western States,

were menacing a separation; when insurrection was flaming in Pennsylvania; when Baltimore, at the head of one half of Maryland, was glowing with opposition; when the two great interests in New York, headed by the Clintons and Livingstons, were united with Colonel Burr, General Gates, and their little band, in open opposition to the administration and the contest with France; when the administration was threatened, even in the town of Boston, I will not say at present by whom, nor with what; there was not one man in either house of Congress of the then majority, nor in any executive department of government, who was not chargeable with the grossest ignorance of the nation, which you impute to the north and south before and since the revolution, nor one who had any experience of foreign affairs. Never was any majority more grossly deceived in their opinion of their own importance and influence. No! not Napoleon, when he undertook the conquest of Russia. Had the administration persevered in the war against France, it would have been turned out at the election of 1800 by two votes to one. Had Washington himself, with his transcendent popularity and all the fascination of his name, been a candidate, he would have undergone the same fate.

The democratic societies, affiliated without number and concatenated to an unknown extent, had long been laying their trains to explode Washington, to sacrifice Adams, and bring in Jefferson. The population in the southern and western States had increased, and their votes with it to an astonishing degree. Yet, all these things were unknown to the ruling majority; or, if partially known, they were not sufficiently considered. Their self-love deluded them to believe what they wished to be true. Washington was aware of this, and prudently retreated. But what had he done before he left the chair? Ellsworth, the firmest pillar of his whole administration in the Senate, he had promoted to the high office of Chief Justice of the United States; King, he had sent ambassador to London; Strong was pleased to resign, as well as Cabot; Hamilton had fled from his unpopularity to the bar in New York; Ames, to that in Boston; and Murray was ordered by Washington to Holland. The utmost efforts of Ellsworth, King, and Strong in the Senate had scarcely been sufficient to hold the head of Washington's administration above water, during the whole of his eight years.

And how was I elected? By a majority of one, or at most two votes. And was this a majority strong enough to support a war, especially against France? Mr. Madison can now scarcely support a war against England, a much more atrocious offender, elected as he was, and supported as he is, by two thirds of the votes. And what was my support in the Senate? Mr. Goodhue, from Massachusetts. Of this man I will say nothing; let the world speak. Mr. Sedgwick, without dignity, never able to win the complacency, or command the attention of his hearers in either house, but ever ready to meet in private caucuses and secret intrigues to oppose me. Mr. Langdon, of New Hampshire, was constant in opposition, as was one from Rhode Island. Had Ellsworth, Strong, and King been there, the world would never have heard of the disgraceful cabals and unconstitutional proceedings of that body.

You say, Sir, that my missions to France, "the great shade in my Presidential escutcheon, paralyzed the public feeling and weakened the foundations of the goodly edifice." I agree, Sir, that they did with that third part of the people, who had been averse to the revolution, and who were then, and always, before and since, governed by English prejudices; and who then, and always, before and since, constantly sighed for a war with France and an alliance with Great Britain; but with none others. The house would have fallen with a much more violent explosion, if those missions to France had not been instituted.

I wish not to fatigue you with too long a letter at once; but, Sir, I will defend my missions to France, as long as I have an eye to direct my hand, or a finger to hold my pen. They were the most disinterested and meritorious actions of my life. I reflect upon them with so much satisfaction, that I desire no other inscription over my gravestone than: "Here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of the peace with France in the year 1800."

In the mean time, I recommend to you, Sir, to inquire into the state of the nation at that time, and into the state of Europe, especially France and Great Britain, and the state of our relations with both, and to consider, at the same time, the important question, whether it is our interest to enlist under the banners of either against the other, or to support at all hazards, and at

every sacrifice, our independence of all. I am, Sir, with great esteem and sincere affection, your friend.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 6 February, 1815.

In my first letter I requested the favor of you to recollect and consider the positive and relative state of this nation, at the time when my "missions to France" were instituted. I now request you to look over the list of senators and representatives in Congress at that time, and then tell me whether you think that the war party had influence enough in this nation to carry on a long war with France. If you should be at a loss concerning the influence of any individual of either party in either house, I promise you I will decompose the character of that individual as a chemist analyzes a mushroom. And then you shall judge for yourself whether the war party had power to maintain a war against France or not.

I affirm that they had not; and nothing but that ignorance of the nation, of which you and I are so sensible, could ever have deluded them into such a confidence in their own power, and such a vain conceit of their own importance, as they then exhibited.

I think, Sir, that in the fair field of controversy, I have a right to request of you a frank and candid declaration of your opinion, whether that party had or had not power to support a war with France for any considerable time, and for what length of time.

But supposing, for argument's sake, what I peremptorily deny, that they could have continued war and maintained their superiority at the then approaching election; supposing, the strongest case that can be imagined, that the President of 1801 had been as absolute as Louis XIV., or Napoleon, able to command by conscriptions the whole population of the United States, for what end or object should the war have been continued? *Cui bono?* What profit? What loss? Losses enough. Taxes enough. If three or five millions could not be borrowed

under an interest of eight per cent., you may easily conjecture how soon we should have seen as glorious a bankruptcy as we now feel. The French had no commerce to enrich our privateers, though they had privateers to enrich themselves upon our commerce. They had no territories accessible to our land forces, to tempt us with prospects of conquests. Were our hopes of aggrandizement in South America or in St. Domingo?

Let me repeat to you once more, Sir, the faction was dizzy. Their brains turned round. They knew not, they saw not the precipice on which they stood.

In my last I observed, that all the old supporters of the Constitution and of Washington's administration, had foreseen the evil and hid themselves. I forbore to mention one of more importance than any of the rest, indeed of almost as much weight as all the rest. I mean Mr. Jay. That gentleman had as much influence in the preparatory measures, in digesting the Constitution, and in obtaining its adoption, as any man in the nation. His known familiarity with Madison and Hamilton, his connection with them in writing the Federalist, and his then connection with all the members of the old Congress, had given to those writings more consideration than both the other writers could have given them. But Mr. Jay, wearied with labors and disgusted by injuries, had retired and refused all further concern in the government.

To despatch all in a few words, a civil war was expected. The party committed suicide; they killed themselves and the national President (not their President) at one shot, and then, as foolishly as maliciously, indicted me for the murder. My own "missions to France," which you call the "great shade in my Presidential escutcheon," I esteem the most splendid diamond in my crown; or, if any one thinks this expression too monarchical, I will say the most brilliant feather in my cap. To such an extent do we differ in opinion. I have always known that my missions to France were my error, heresy, and great offence in the judgment, prejudices, predilections, and passions of a small party in every State; but no gentleman in the fifteen years past has ever publicly assailed those missions till your letter to Mr. Randolph. A few years ago, a scurrilous scribbler in Baltimore, as I suppose, one of those vagabonds, fugitives from a halter, a pillory or a bailiff, in Great Britain or Ireland, threw out

his billingsgate upon me and my missions to France. I published what I thought a vindication of my missions to France. Mr. Pickering accused me, as I remember, of writing a hundred pages in justification of them. Those hundred pages I am afraid you have never read. If you had, I am confident you would not at this day have assailed my administration on that quarter. I have a right to ask you candidly, whether you have read it or not. If you have, I shall wonder at your censure of my "missions"; if you have not, I shall wonder less.

Mr. Randolph, in his letter to you, says: "*The artillery of the press has long been the instrument of our subjugation.*" Such a confession I never expected to see from such a penitent. And which were the presses that formed the fortresses? And who were the engineers that directed this artillery? Mr. Randolph's own dear friends, *Ned Church*, *Philip Freneau*, *Peter Markoe*, *Andrew Brown*, *James Duane*, *Greenleaf*, *Dennison*, *Cheetham*, *Tom Paine*, *Stephens Thompson Mason*, *Callender*, *Wood*, the classical author, who wrote the history of the administration of John Adams, in two large octavo volumes, and last, not least, *Benjamin Austin* and his *Old South*, not to mention his own dear *Cooper*, *Matthew Lyon*, *Parson Ogden*, *Parson Austin*, or *Christopher Macpherson.* I believe, Sir, you understand little of this *fatras*, but you must understand it all, and much more which may be hereafter explained, before you can judge "*avec connaissance de cause*," of the merit and demerit of my "missions to France."

We differ so widely upon this important point, that I feel an ardent zeal to make a proselyte of you to my faith, and I do not despair of it.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 11 February, 1815.

We are ignorant, as you intimate, of one another. We are ignorant of our own nation; we are ignorant of the geography, the laws, customs, and manners and habits of our own country. Massachusetts, as knowing as any State in the Union, is deplorably ignorant of her sister States, and, what is more to be

lamented still, she is ignorant of herself. She is composed of two nations, if not three. One party reads the newspapers and pamphlets of its own church, and interdicts all writings of the opposite complexion. The other party condemns all such as heresy, and will not read or suffer to be read, as far as its influence extends, any thing but its own libels. "The avenue to the public ear is shut" in Massachusetts, as Mr. Randolph says it is in Virginia. With us, the press is under a virtual imprimatur, to such a degree, that I do not believe I could get these letters to you printed in a newspaper in Boston. Each party is deliberately and studiously kept in ignorance of the other. Have naked truth and honest candor a fair hearing or impartial reading in this or any other country? Have not narrow bigotry, the most envious malignity, the most base, vulgar, sordid, fishwoman scurrility, and the most palpable lies, a plenary indulgence, and an unbounded licentiousness? If there is ever to be an amelioration of the condition of mankind, philosophers, theologians, legislators, politicians and moralists will find that the regulation of the press is the most difficult, dangerous, and important problem they have to resolve. Mankind cannot now be governed without it, nor at present with it. Instead of a consolation, it is an aggravation to know that this kind of ignorance is not peculiar to Massachusetts. It is universal. It runs through every State in the Union. It is at least as prevalent in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, as in Massachusetts. Parties in politics, like sects in religion, will not read, indeed they are not permitted by their leaders to read, any thing against their own creed, nor indeed to converse with any but their own club. The Bible is forbidden to the vulgar by all parties.

Let me give an example. Coming down from the Senate chamber, when I was Vice-President, a hawker, at the bottom of the stairs presented to me an octavo volume. Turning to the title-page, I found it was the "American Remembrancer," written by Callender. I knew nothing of the book or its author, gave the pedlar his price, and pocketed the book. Turning over the leaves at home, I found it full of the grossest lies and calumnies against Washington, against myself, and the whole government. I pointed to passages, but the gentlemen of the ruling party would take no notice of them. "They were below

contempt." New England is ignorant of this book, but it was circulated in the middle and southern States, and believed as an oracle. No measures were taken to counteract an engine that contributed so essentially to the final prevalence of the southern over the northern interests. "The Prospect before Us" appeared afterwards, but no measures were taken as an antidote to that poison. Not only was ignorance permitted to remain, but error and falsehood to run and be glorified.

If we turn our attention to another subject, we shall see the same ignorance, inadvertency, nonchalance, or apathy in the leaders of the faction, who were for continuing the war. The utmost exertions of all their recruiting officers, with all the influence of Hamilton and Pinckney, reënforced by the magical name of Washington, had not been able to raise one half of their favorite little army. That army was as unpopular, as if it had been a ferocious wild beast let loose upon the nation to devour it. In newspapers, in pamphlets, and in common conversation they were called cannibals. A thousand anecdotes, true or false, of their licentiousness, were propagated and believed. There was not in the house of representatives a more unbridled tongue or a more licentious vituperatory orator against war, the army, the navy, the administration, and all their measures and men, than Mr. Randolph. He called the army ragamuffins, and was not even called to order. Yet all these things did not remove from the minds of those leaders the ignorance of the faintness of their own influence and the imbecility of their power. No proper measures were taken by means of the press to counteract abuses. Indiscreet and injudicious prosecutions were instituted by some of the law officers of the United States, which did more harm than good; yet these were thought sufficient to suppress all opposition. I pray you to remark, Sir, that I speak of the leaders, of the advocates for continuing the war. The soundest statesmen of the ruling party in both houses approved of my missions to France, and were highly pleased with them, as I will show you hereafter.

Another demonstration of the inattention and inconsideration, if not of the ignorance of those leaders, arose from an unfashionable source of mischief, which I fear *labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum*. I mean that stream of misrepresentations of the men and measures of the administration in circular letters from

members of Congress to their constituents in the middle and especially in the southern States, which began as early as 1789, when Congress was held in New York, and continued through the eight years of Washington's administration, flowing all the time in peculiarly copious abundance against me, and which, in the electioneering parliamentary campaign of 1796, and from thence to 1801, swelled, raged, foamed in all the fury of a tempest at sea against me. A collection of those circular letters would make many volumes, and contain more lies in proportion to the time than the *Acta Sanctorum*. Yet no measures were taken to raise dikes against this inundation!

Another proof of ignorance may surprise you; I hope it will not offend you. Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney were assembled at Philadelphia to advise in the selection of officers for the army. The history of the formation of this triumvirate would be as curious as that of Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, or that of Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, and the effects of it have been and may be, for any thing I know, as prosperous or adverse to mankind. One thing I know, that Cicero was not sacrificed to the vengeance of Antony by the unfeeling selfishness of the latter triumvirate more egregiously than John Adams was to the unbridled and unbounded ambition of Alexander Hamilton in the American triumvirate.

Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney depended for the support of their power and the system of their politics entirely on New York and Pennsylvania. The northern and the southern States were immovably fixed in opposition to each other. If this triumvirate did not know this, they were as ignorant as you and I know, and acknowledge, we all are of each other. Pennsylvania was compounded of Germans, Irish, Quakers, and a few ancient English families, who had been generally attached to the proprietary government. These were the great capital classes. The subdivisions of Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Anabaptists, Moravians, &c., &c., &c., were infinite. The Quakers were all in principle hostile to war.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 14 February, 1815.

The Quakers, as I said in my last, were in principle against all wars, and, moreover, greatly prejudiced against New England, and personally against me. The Irish, who are very numerous and powerful in Pennsylvania, had been, and still were enthusiasts for the French revolution, extremely exasperated against old England, bitterly prejudiced against New England, strongly inclined in favor of the southern interest and against the northern. The Germans hated France and England too, but had been taught to hate New England more than either, and to abhor taxes more than all. A universal and perpetual exemption from taxes was held up to them as a temptation, by underhand politicians. The English, Scotch, and Irish Presbyterians, the Methodists, Anabaptists, the Unitarians and Universalists, with Dr. Priestley at their head, and all the other sectaries, even many of the Episcopalians themselves, had been carried away with the French revolution, and firmly believed that Bonaparte was the instrument of Providence to destroy the Pope and introduce the millennium. All these interests and parties were headed by Mr. McKean, an upright Chief Justice, an enlightened lawyer, a sagacious politician, and the most experienced statesman in the nation; by Mr. Mifflin, one of the earliest in the legislature of Pennsylvania and the first and second Congresses of the nation, an active officer in the revolutionary army, always extremely popular; by Jonathan B. Smith, an old revolutionary character. Dr. Rush, George Clymer, Mr. Ingersoll, wished well to the administration, but saw that nothing could be done, and were quite discouraged. Mr. John Dickinson and the venerable Charles Thomson were decidedly against us. Gallatin and Dallas, able and indefatigable men, as opposite to us as the poles, and Tenche Coxe, a runaway from his master Hamilton.

My triumvirate were either ignorant or wholly inattentive and inconsiderate of all these things. Mr. Jefferson knew them all. These parties had all been making their court to him for fifteen years. And what had my triumvirate to depend upon to support a war against France? The Willings, the Chews,

and the Allens, three very respectable families, it is true, but who lost all their influence in Pennsylvania by their invariable opposition to the American revolution. A complete revolution had taken place in the minds of the people, against the national administration, as appeared by the election of Mr. McKean for governor, by a majority, I believe, of thirty thousand votes. The revolution in the legislature, though not yet so decisive, was nevertheless so great that the friends of the national administration, apprehensive of losing all the votes, were obliged to beat a parley with their antagonists, and agree to appoint half their electors of President and Vice-President from one party, and half from another. Such was the state of things when I received two letters, one from Frederic Augustus Muhlenberg, and another from Peter Muhlenberg. These two Germans, who had been long in public affairs and in high offices, were the great leaders and oracles of the whole German interest, in Pennsylvania and the neighboring States. Augustus very respectfully requested me to appoint him to some office. I suggested the idea to some of the heads of department, but none would hear it with patience. I had determined against it myself, because he had failed in business, and several reports were in circulation unfavorable to his integrity, as always happens in cases of bankruptcy. As his poverty might tempt him to misapply public money, I was afraid to trust him in any office that would give him the disposal of any of it, and no other employment occurred. Peter had served with reputation in the revolutionary army as a general officer, commanded a brigade of German troops, was universally allowed to be a brave and able officer; he had long been a member of Congress, had the universal character of an honest man, representing a district of honest Germans. It is true, he had voted generally against the administration. This gentleman wrote me a letter, asking nothing, but offering his services in the army, and expressly declaring that he would make no stipulation with regard to rank.

Detesting in my heart that contracted principle of monopoly and exclusion, which had prevailed through Washington's administration, and to which I had so often been compelled to submit, I was very desirous of relaxing it upon this occasion. I determined to propose it to the triumvirate. Accordingly I took an opportunity to propose it to General Washington, in a

conference between him and me alone. General Washington said, "By all that I have seen and heard in the late war, General Muhlenberg is a good officer." But the triumvirate would not consent. I was provoked enough to have nominated him notwithstanding; but I knew that he would be negatived by the Senate. Hamilton would give the hint to Pickering, Pickering to Goodhue and Hillhouse, Sedgwick and Bingham, &c., &c., and down would fall the guillotine of a negative upon the neck of poor Muhlenberg. Unwilling to expose him to such an affront, or myself to another, for this would not have been the first, I forbore to nominate him. And what was the consequence? These two Muhlenbergs addressed the public with their names, both in English and German, with invectives against the administration, and warm recommendations of Mr. Jefferson. Although I dreaded the change, well knowing that the party about to come into power would conduct themselves as they have done, I could not very severely condemn the Muhlenbergs; for a faction, selfish and contracted, so entirely devoted to such a leader as Hamilton, would pursue a system more destructive than the other.

The Muhlenbergs turned the whole body of Germans, great numbers of the Irish, and many of the English, and in this manner introduced the total change that followed in both houses of the legislature, and in all the executive departments of the national government. Upon such slender threads did our elections then depend! The federalists had marched for twelve years "*super ignes suppositos cineri doloso.*" What strength, what power, what force, had such a party to support a war against France, when she held the olive branch to us, with both her hands, upon our own terms?

With feelings and sentiments that I am not master of language to express, I must enter on another subject. If American history is ever to be understood or related with truth, two characters must be explained. Their portraits must be drawn at full length. Their birth, their education, their services, their marriages, their religion, their morals, their manners, their political principles and connections, their lives and their deaths, must be narrated by a historian, under the oath of the President de Thou, "*Pro veritate historiarum mearum Deum ipsum obtestor.*" I myself could write a volume of biography for each

of them, if I had clear eyes and steady hands; but, if I should spend years in writing them, I know they would not be read by any party; and, after all, I should not dare to take the oath of Thuanus. These characters are Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton.

But I must pause to acknowledge your favor of February 6th. Its sentiments are worthy of the best men and citizens. I may be more particular hereafter. Your sagacity has penetrated one cause of the impossibility of maintaining the war against France, to wit, "prostration of public credit." The gulf of national bankruptcy yawned. The monsters, paper money, tender law, and regulation of prices, all stalked in horrors before me. I have hinted at this subject in a former letter, and will consider it more in detail in a future one.

Meantime, with unfeigned regard.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 17 February, 1815.

I have never known, in any country, the prejudice in favor of birth, parentage, and descent more conspicuous than in the instance of Colonel Burr. That gentleman was connected by blood with many respectable families in New England. He was the son of one president and the grandson of another president of Nassau Hall, or Princeton University; the idol of all the Presbyterians in New York, New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and elsewhere. He had served in the army, and came out of it with the character of a knight without fear and an able officer. He had afterwards studied and practised law with application and success. Buoyed upon these religious partialities and this military and juridical reputation, it is no wonder that Governor Clinton and Chancellor Livingston should take notice of him. They made him attorney-general, and the legislature sent him to Congress as a senator, where he served, I believe, six years. At the next election he was, however, left out, and being at that time somewhat embarrassed in his circumstances, and reluctant to return

to the bar, he would have rejoiced in an appointment in the army. In this situation, I proposed to General Washington, in a conference between him and me, and through him to the triumvirate, to nominate Colonel Burr for a brigadier-general. Washington's answer to me was, "By all that I have known and heard, Colonel Burr is a brave and able officer; but the question is, whether he has not equal talents at intrigue." How shall I describe to you my sensations and reflections at that moment? He had compelled me to promote, over the heads of Lincoln, Gates, Clinton, Knox, and others, and even over Pinckney, one of his own triumvirate, the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself, and now dreaded an intriguer in a poor brigadier! He did, however, propose it to the triumvirate, at least to Hamilton. But I was not permitted to nominate Burr. If I had been, what would have been the consequence? Shall I say, that Hamilton would have been now alive, and Hamilton and Burr now at the head of our affairs? What then? If I had nominated Burr without the consent of the triumvirate, a negative in Senate was certain. Burr to this day knows nothing of this. But what followed? A volume would be necessary to explain the consequences. A few hints must suffice. Hamilton made a journey to Boston, to Providence, &c., to persuade the people and their legislatures, but without success, to throw away some of their votes, that Adams might not have the unanimous vote of New England; consequently that Pinckney might be brought in as President and Adams as Vice-President. Washington was dead, and the Cincinnati were assembled at New York to choose Hamilton for their new President. Whether he publicly opened his project to the whole assembly of the Cincinnati or not, I will not say; but of this I have such proof that I cannot doubt, namely, that he broached it privately to such members as he could trust; for the learned and pious Doctors Dwight and Badcock, who having been chaplains in the army, were then attending as two reverend knights of the order, with their blue ribbons and bright eagles at their sable buttonholes, were heard to say repeatedly in the room where the society met, "we must sacrifice Adams," "we must sacrifice Adams." Of this fact I have such evidence that I should dare to appeal, if it were

worth while, to the only survivor, Dr. Dwight, of New Haven University.

About the same time, walking in the streets of Philadelphia, I met, on the opposite sidewalk, Colonel Joseph Lyman, of Springfield, one of the most amiable men in Congress, and one of the most candid men in the world. As soon as he saw me, he crossed over to my side of the street, and said, "Sir, I cross over to tell you some news." "Aye! what news? I hope it is good." "Hamilton has divided the federalists, and proposed to them to give you the go-by and bring in Pinckney. By this step he has divided the federalists, and given great offence to the honestest part of them. I am glad of it, for it will be the ruin of his faction." My answer was, "Colonel Lyman, it will be, as you say, the ruin of his faction; but it will also be the ruin of honester men than any of them." And with these words I marched on, and left him to march the other way. I was soon afterwards informed by personal witnesses and private letters, that Hamilton had assembled a meeting of the citizens and made an elaborate harangue to them. He spoke of the President, John Adams, with respect! But with what respect, I leave you, Sir, to conjecture. Hamilton soon after called another more secret caucus to prepare a list of representatives for the city of New York, in their State legislature, who were to choose electors of President and Vice-President. He fixed upon a list of his own friends, people of little weight or consideration in the city or the country. Burr, who had friends in all circles, had a copy of this list brought to him immediately. He read it over, with great gravity folded it up, put it in his pocket, and, without uttering another word said, "Now I have him all hollow;" but immediately went to Governor Clinton, General Gates, Chancellor Livingston, &c., &c., stirred them all up, and persuaded the Governor and the General to stand candidates, with a list of the most respectable citizens, to represent the city in the legislature. Burr's list was chosen, as common sense must have foreseen, by a great majority, went to Albany, and chose electors, who voted unanimously for Mr. Jefferson, though New York at all antecedent elections voted unanimously for Adams. Thus ignorant of the character of this nation, of Pennsylvania, and of his own city and State of New York, was Alexander Hamilton! And how could it be otherwise? Born

in Nevis, educated in Scotland, spending a short time at Columbia College, and then as aid-de-camp in the army, depending wholly on the Cincinnati, the old English tory interest in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, — had such a faction, with such a leader at their head, influence or power to support a war against France? The very supposition is ridiculous. Especially when France had cried *Peccavi;* when France had renounced all her claims and demands of tribute; when France had abandoned all demands of apologies from me, for certain free expressions in my speeches to Congress and answers to addresses; when France, by an authentic act of her sovereign authority, authentically certified to me through several channels, had solemnly pledged herself to receive my ambassadors in their highest character. The rage of the Hamilton faction upon that occasion appeared to me then, and has appeared ever since, an absolute delirium.

I thank you, Sir, for your kind note of the 13th. Madam Breck and Mrs. Lloyd will confer an obligation on Mrs. and Mr. Adams, whenever they can find it convenient to make a visit to Quincy, and Mr. Lloyd's company with them will enhance the favor.

It is not my design nor desire to excite you to a controversy. Be assured, I considered what you said of me, exactly as you intended it, and that in a very friendly light. My wish is equally friendly to give you information of some facts, of which, from your age, I presume you were not aware.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 21 February, 1815.

In my letter of the 6th of this month, I asked you "if three or five millions could not be borrowed, under an interest of eight per cent., you may easily conjecture how soon we should have seen as glorious a bankruptcy as we now feel." In your letter to me of the same date, February 6th, you admit that "all would have proved fallacious, if public credit had become as prostrate, and all national feeling as callous, as they seem to be

at the present moment." Here, Sir, is a coincidence of sentiment, certainly without any concert, intercourse, or communication between us, somewhat remarkable. Your sagacity accorded with my bitter experience. I most sincerely condole with you over that "callousness of national feelings" which has appeared in our dear New England more grossly, if we except Washington and Alexandria, than anywhere else. That callousness, however, in another year of war, notwithstanding the "prostration of public credit," would have been softened, if not wholly dissolved. *And this the British Ministry have had cunning enough to perceive.* Witness the treaty of peace of 24th December, 1814.

How shall I explain to you, Sir, the horrors of national bankruptcy, of paper money, of tender laws, and of regulation of prices, which then stared me in the face? For this purpose I must make a tedious and disagreeable circuit, and must hope and beg to be pardoned for that egotism and vanity which you think my "strong foible."

My hobby-horse was a navy; Alexander Hamilton's, an army. I had no idea that France, involved as she was in Europe, could send any formidable invasion to America. A petty squadron, a single ship of war, or privateer, might insult our coasts and harbors, as they had done, and a very small force of sailors and soldiers might lay some of our cities under contribution. Against this danger, I thought brigantines, sloops, schooners, and frigates, well armed and manned and officered, the most economical, the most certain and effectual defence; and as many fortifications as we could afford to erect in the best chosen places, for the protection of our most exposed cities, ought to be erected and garrisoned as soon as possible. Accordingly in my communications to Congress, I recommended strong measures for maritime and naval defence, and four or six regiments or companies (I forget which, and will not spend time to ascertain) of artillery to garrison the fortresses already built or intended to be immediately erected.

But Alexander Hamilton, who fled from his own unpopularity, and I may say from national hatred, to the bar at New York, to acquire the character of an unambitious man, was found to be (to borrow a little modest oratory from your correspondent, Mr. Randolph) "commander-in-chief" of the House

of Representatives, of the Senate, of the heads of department, of General Washington, and last, and least, if you will, of the President of the United States. This language, you will say, is highly figurative; but in fact and in essence, it is strictly and literally true. I am thankful that the sequel proved that he was not the "commander-in-chief" of the nation. This great genius, this sublime statesman, this profound politician, found that he could not apply himself to the black-letter law, in Latin and French; that he could not devote his attention to the interests and causes of his clients. This indeed had never been his intention. Nothing was further from his thoughts. His deep meditations were for the salvation of the United States, not for Nevis, his native country. Accordingly he sits down and writes a long, elaborate, and voluminous letter to a confidential friend in Congress, in which he graciously condescended to delineate a perfect system of administration. He projected negotiations, and nominated ambassadors; he urged the establishment of an army of fifty thousand men, ten thousand of whom to be cavalry; he advised to seize upon all the sources of revenue not yet occupied, to "invigorate the treasury." This letter was brought to me, I believe by Mr. Tracy. The arrogance and presumption of it, I despised; the extravagance of it astonished me; the gross ignorance it betrayed, and the fatal influence I knew it would have with the ruling party, grieved me to the heart. This letter still exists, as I believe. If it does not, more than monkish knavery has been exerted to destroy it. I appeal to Wolcott and Pickering, and might appeal to many others now living, and to many who are dead. The House of Representatives dared not adopt the extravagance of the plan, but without consulting the President, who was far beneath their notice, they adopted part of the scheme of their leader, and voted, as I remember, about twelve thousand men.

Here must be a *hiatus valde deflendus!* If you wish to have it filled up, I will hereafter attempt it.

This army, small as it was, called for revenue. Revenue demanded taxes. Taxes had already raised three rebellions, *as they were called*, and threatened three times, if not ten times three. The public necessities were so apparent, that Congress authorized me to borrow five millions of dollars. They were so apprised of the difficulty and uncertainty of raising this

small sum, that they dared not ascertain and limit the interest at which it was to be borrowed, but threw all the risk and responsibility upon me to determine the terms of the loan. Of course, consultation after consultation took place between me and my secretary of the treasury, Mr. Wolcott, concerning the terms of this loan, — a loan that *now* appears but a trifle. Mr. Wolcott's opinion was, that the loan could not be obtained at a less interest than eight per cent. I objected to this interest. I thought it extravagant and unnecessary. I thought it might be had at six per cent. Where were we going? What were we about? Five millions would be but a sprat for the nourishment of leviathans. We must borrow more, if we give ten or twelve per cent.; and so on without end. Mr. Wolcott, who appeared to me *then*, as he does *now*, to be perfectly honest and disinterested in the business, said, "The legal interest in several of the States, is seven or eight per cent. The interest given in private transactions is much more, amounting to ten, twelve, and still more, and I do not believe the money can be obtained at less than eight." I desired him to consider of it, and inquire farther. At another interview, Mr. Wolcott persevered in his opinion that eight per cent. was the lowest interest at which the loan could be obtained. He said his situation in the treasury, as controller and as secretary, had given him opportunities to know the quantity of money in the country; that there was not such a plenty of it as some people thought; that, if the loan should fail, it would be a fatal discouragement to the people; that the recruiting service for the army would be stopped; that the treasury would be embarrassed, &c., &c. I said, "surely there are in the United States men of wealth enough, who love their country well enough, to lend five millions at six per cent., upon the faith of the United States, which ought to be as stable as the soil. Think and inquire again." I was so distressed with this question, that I wrote a letter to Mr. Wolcott, remonstrating against that interest of eight per cent., in which I said, that fifteen years before, I had borrowed a larger sum in Holland for four and a half, five and a half, and never more than six per cent., upon the naked pledge of the faith of the United States, and therefore I could not but think an unfair advantage was taken of the public.[1] Mr. Wolcott, however, at our next

[1] Vol. ix. p. 57.

conference, persisted in his opinion, was afraid to publish proposals for the loan at a less interest than eight per cent. My patience, which had been put, by enemies and friends, to so many severe trials, was quite exhausted, and I broke out, "This damned army will be the ruin of this country; if it must be so, it must; I cannot help it. *Issue your proposals as you please.*" I ask pardon for that peevish and vulgar expression; but for the truth, in substance and essence, of this narration, I appeal to Mr. Wolcott himself. I know that Oliver Wolcott dare not lie; and if he does not recollect these facts, his memory is not so good as mine.

At the rate of our expenses for the support of government, the navy, and that army, I was sure that national bankruptcy must occur in one year; and what resource had we? Paper money! I had been a witness of the nature and effects of old tenor, from 1745 to 1751, and of continental currency from 1775 to 1782, indeed to 1791; and must we buffet our way through such a chaos to support an army already called ragamuffins and cannibals, in total idleness and inaction? Unless they spent their time in pillage and plunder, in debauching wives and seducing daughters.

I think, Sir, I have suggested considerations enough to convince you that the then dominant party had not sufficient influence in the nation to proceed in the war against France, after the government of that nation had offered us peace upon honorable terms; no, nor after she had offered us negotiations upon honorable terms. But if I had possessed the hands of Midas, and could have changed trees and rocks into gold, or could I, by stamping on the ground, have called up legions of infantry and cavalry, for what purpose should I have continued the war? The end of war is peace; and peace was offered me. Had I continued the war, and raised a great army, every wise man in the world would have said of me, in the language of Boileau, "Midas! le roi Midas a les oreilles d'âne!" Mr. Hamilton and his friends might have said *Δὸς που στῶ, καὶ τὴν γῆν κίνησω.* But he had not the *που στῶ.* This nation was not then harnessed in taxes, nor broken to the draught.

I ask again a question, which I am not certain you will fully understand. If you do not, I will explain it to you hereafter. The question is, whether Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Pickering ex-

pected to draw their resources from South America or St. Domingo.

In your note of the 13th, you congratulate me on the "news of the day." On the news from New Orleans, I reciprocate your congratulations. On the news of peace, I say, "rejoice always in all things." But with what feelings of indignation, of grief, sorrow, and humiliation, I rejoice, I leave you to consider, after reading the inclosed letter, which, in full faith in your honor and candor, I trust to you, in confidence that you will return it to me by the post, without making any improper use of it.[1]

TO WILLIAM CRANCH.

Quincy, 3 March, 1815.

Our fisheries have not been abandoned. They cannot be abandoned. They shall not be abandoned. We hold them by no grant, gift, bargain, sale, or last will and testament, nor by hereditary descent from Great Britain. We hold them in truth, not as kings and priests claim their rights and power, by hypocrisy and craft, but from God and our own swords.

1. The author of nature and common father of mankind has made his ocean free and common to all his human children. We have, therefore, as clear a moral and divine right to the fisheries, at least as the English, Scotch, Irish, or any other people.

2. We have all the rights and liberties of Englishmen in the fisheries, in as full and ample a manner as we had before the revolution; we have never forfeited, surrendered, alienated, or lost any one punctilio of those rights or liberties. On the contrary, we compelled the British nation to acknowledge them, in the most solemn manner, before God and the world, in the treaty of peace of 1783.

3. We have a stronger, clearer, and more perfect right than the Britons or any other nation of Europe, or on the globe, for

[1] The allusion is to an extremely interesting confidential letter of J. Q. Adams, written to his father from Ghent, after the signature of the treaty, explaining his position, as one of the negotiators, upon the disputed point of the fisheries. It was this that gave rise to the letter immediately succeeding.

they were all indebted to us and our ancestors for all these fisheries. We discovered them. We explored them. We discovered and settled the countries round about them, at our own expense, labor, risk, and industry, without assistance from Britain. We have possessed, occupied, exercised, and practised them from the beginning. We have done more towards exploring the best fishing grounds and stations, and all the bays, harbors, inlets, creeks, rivers, shores, and coasts, where fish of all sorts were to be found, and discovered, by experiments, the best means and methods of curing, preserving, drying, and perfecting the commodity, as well as extending and improving the commerce in it, than all the Britons and all the rest of Europe.

4. If conquest can confer any right, our right is at least equal and common with Englishmen in any part of the world. Indeed, it is incomparably superior, for we conquered all the countries round about the fisheries. We conquered Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and dispossessed the French, both hostile and neutral. We did more, in proportion, towards the conquest of Canada than any other portion of the British empire, and could, and would, and should have done the whole at an easier expense to ourselves, both of men and money, if the British government would have permitted that union of the colonies, which we projected, planned, earnestly desired, and humbly petitioned in 1754. In short, we have done more, in proportion, than any other part of the British empire towards protecting and defending all these fisheries against the French. For all these reasons, if there is a people under heaven who could advance a color of a pretension to any exclusive privileges, or any rights of one nation more than another in the fisheries, *that* people are the inhabitants of the United States of America, and especially of New England. But we set up no such partial claims. We demand only those equal rights and privileges that we have always held, possessed, and enjoyed. These we assert, and these we will have. They are of more importance to us than to any other nation. It would be illnatured in the English to deprive us of them, if they had the power, which they have not. There is room enough, and fish enough, for both nations.

As you are famous for indefatigable research, I wish you would ransack all the books and all the rules for the construc-

tion of treaties, and concerning the dissolution and renovation of treaties, to show that the article in the treaty of 1783 is still in force. I say, as it is an acknowledgment only of an antecedent right, it is of eternal obligation.

TO DR. JEDIDIAH MORSE.

Quincy, 4 March, 1815.

Thanks for your favor of the 1st, and the sermon. I have never seen Trumbull's History in print, and know nothing of it, but from the very hasty perusal of the manuscript you sent me. I esteem Dr. Morse and Dr. Ware; the vote of the former against the latter[1] never diminished my esteem for either, because I believed both to be able and conscientious men. I esteem Dr. Morse and Miss Adams, and the flickerings and bickerings between them have made no change in my regard for either. In short, Sir, I have been a reader of theological, philosophical, political, and personal disputes for more than sixty years, and now look at them with little more interest than at the flying clouds of the day.

When you apply to me to assist you in writing history,[2] I know not whether I ought to laugh or cry. I have little faith in history. I read it as I do romance, believing what is probable and rejecting what I must. Thucydides, Tacitus, Livy, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Raynal, and Voltaire, are all alike. Our American history for the last fifty years is already as much corrupted as any half century of ecclesiastical history, from the Council of Nice to the restoration of the Inquisition in 1814. If I were to write a history of the last sixty years, as the facts rest in my memory, and according to my judgment, and under the oath of "*pro veritate historiarum mearum Deum ipsum obtestor*," a hundred writers in America, France, England, and

[1] In the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, on the ground, that the election of a person of Dr. Ware's theological opinions would be a violation of the statutes of Mr. Hollis, the founder of the professorship to be filled. This act was the origin of a long and sharp controversy in Massachusetts.

[2] Dr. Morse proposed to continue Trumbull's History, but he finally converted a portion of the materials collected for that purpose into a work, entitled *Annals of the American Revolution.*

Holland, would immediately appear, and call me, to myself, and before the world, a gross liar and a perjured villain.

I have never preserved newspapers or pamphlets. The few I have ever attempted to save, I have long since given away. Mr. Shaw has in his Athenæum more of them than any other person. Private letters I have preserved in considerable numbers, but they ought not to be opened these hundred years, and then, perhaps, will not be found of much consequence, except as memorials of private friendship.

If you desire it, I may hereafter give you two or three samples of such a history as I should write; anecdotes, of no kind of consequence now, unless they should serve to show how many thousand facts are wholly concealed and unknown to the world, and how many more will be finally unknown to posterity; facts, which mark characters, and might materially influence great events.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 6 March, 1815.

As method is of no importance in my letters, I will deviate from the course I was in, to speak of the project of the independence of South America in 1798. Since my glances at this subject have excited your curiosity, it shall be gratified. As the prudence and necessity of my mission to France are cogently demonstrated by this history, I pray you to read it with patience in detail.

During our revolutionary war, General Miranda came to the United States, travelled through many, if not all of them, was introduced to General Washington and his aids, secretaries, and all the gentlemen of his family, to the other general officers and their families, and to many of the colonels.[1] He acquired the character of a classical scholar, of a man of universal knowledge, of a great general, and master of all the military sciences, and of great sagacity, an inquisitive mind, and an insatiable curiosity. It was a general opinion and report, that he knew more of the families, parties, and connections in the United

[1] He seems to have had long conferences with M. Marbois, the French Chargé d'Affaires, at Philadelphia, and to have communicated through him with the government at Versailles. *Histoire de la Louisiane*, p. 161.

States, than any other man in them; that he knew more of every campaign, siege, battle, and skirmish that had ever occurred in the whole war, than any officer of our army, or any statesman in our councils. His constant topic was the independence of South America, her immense wealth, inexhaustible resources, innumerable population, impatience under the Spanish yoke, and disposition to throw off the dominion of Spain. It is most certain that he filled the heads of many of the young officers with brilliant visions of wealth, free trade, republican government, &c., &c., in South America. Hamilton was one of his most intimate friends and confidential admirers, and Colonel Smith, I presume, was another. Of Burr I will say nothing, because I know nothing with certainty. Of Dayton I will say but little. Of Wilkinson, nothing at all, at present. But of Winthrop Sargent, Governor of the Mississippi Territory, and one of the most intelligent of them all, I will say, that he acknowledged to me, with apparent humiliation and grief, that he had been one who had been carried away by the fashionable enthusiasm, and been charmed with the ideas of wealth, glory, and liberty, which the independence of South America exhibited. General Knox was also one of his intimates. I had never seen Miranda, and have never seen him yet. But this was the universal language concerning Miranda, of all the Americans whom I met in France, Holland, and England, without one exception.

Some years after the peace of 1783, Miranda came to England, and was several weeks in London. He never came near me. I never heard he had been there till years afterwards. I have lately heard, that his apology for avoiding my house was, that if he had been seen there, the Spanish ambassador might have been informed of it, and the Marquis del Campo might have procured from court an order for his arrest. This excuse may be true, and I may and do conjecture other reasons that may be equally true, though I need not explain them at present. But he did meet Colonel Smith, secretary of legation to my commission to the Court of St. James; was intimate with him, though I knew nothing of it, and persuaded him to travel to Holland, Prussia, and Germany. On this journey he persuaded Smith to lend him money to the amount of some hundred guineas to pursue his travels to Russia. The money he

afterwards honorably and punctually remitted to his benefactor. He afterwards entered the service of France, commanded armies, was accused of treason, tried, and honorably acquitted. But he soon went over to England, procured audiences and conferences with Mr. Pitt and Mr. King, some of the results of which I shall proceed to state to you.

On the 25th of August, 1798, I received a letter at Quincy from Mr. Pickering, Secretary of State, dated Trenton, 21st August, 1798,[1] inclosed in a large packet of papers, among which was a letter from Mr. King, one from Mr. Joseph Pedro Caro, and one from Miranda. Mr. Pickering informed me, that he had received under the same cover two letters, one for Colonel Hamilton and the other for General Knox, which he forwarded by the same post to those gentlemen.

Mr. King's letter to the Secretary of State, Mr. Pickering, dated February 26th, 1798, was in these words.[2]

. . . . . .

I inclose Mr. Pickering's original letter and an authenticated official copy of Mr. King's, requesting the return of them by post. In my next, I will develop more of this mystery, which, I think, abounds with instruction to American statesmen, among whom you, Mr. Lloyd, will be enumerated, whether you will or no. You are in a cage. Like Sterne's starling, you "can't get out."

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 12 March, 1815.

I am infinitely obliged to you for your letter of March 8th. From 1758 to 1775, I practised at the bar, and, suffering under ill health, I rode the circuits of the province more than any other lawyer in the States, and this more for exercise and the recovery of my health than for any profit I made by these excursions; for I could have made more in my office at home. I practised considerably in the county of Essex, and became somewhat intimately acquainted with King, Hooper, and Colonel Lee, of

[1] See vol. viii. p. 583.
[2] For this letter, see vol. viii. p. 585.

Marblehead, and my uncle, Isaac Smith, of Boston, the three greatest employers of fishermen and greatest exporters of fish in the county of Essex. I also attended the courts in the counties of Plymouth and Barnstable, made one tour of a fortnight, to Martha's Vineyard, and, in short, became much acquainted with merchants, sea-captains, and even sailors employed in the fisheries of whale, cod, salmon, seals, and mackerel, in Nantucket, the Vineyard, and Cape Cod. I had argued many causes, both in Essex and on the Cape, in which the fisheries of all descriptions were explained. I saw the value of them to New England. When the conferences opened at Paris, in 1782, I thought myself tolerably well informed on the subject of the fisheries, and accordingly represented to my colleagues and the British agents our right to them, our constant possession of them, our proximity to them, our discovery and defence of them, and, above all, their essential importance to us in every branch of our commerce with Europe, the West Indies, the southern States, &c. In short, they were our only staple commodity. These representations, however, made not all the impression I desired. I was thought to be too zealous, sanguine, and ardent. Even my own colleagues seemed to think I greatly exaggerated the value and importance of all the fisheries, especially those on the coasts of Labrador, in the gulf of St. Lawrence, &c., &c. The Comte de Vergennes, too, appeared more eager to cheat us out of them even than the English. And the Comte had more influence with one of my colleagues than I had. And both of them thought peace, and the acknowledgment of our independence, much more essential than the fisheries. Determined never to consent to peace, nor to set my hand to any treaty without an explicit acknowledgment of our right to them all, and hearing of the arrival in Holland of some of our Nantucket sea-captains, Coffins, Folgers, and Rotches, I wrote to them, stating all the questions relative to the subject, and received very prompt and obliging answers, containing ample details, not only of the course and practice of all the fisheries, but of their great value and indispensable necessity to New England, and especially to Massachusetts. These letters I communicated immediately to my colleagues, as well as to our opponents, but I never could obtain from either of the former his consent to make the fisheries a *sine qua non*, an ultimatum, nor from the

latter the least appearance of relaxation, till the last moment, when Mr. Laurens, who joined us for the first time on the last evening of the conferences, united with me in the explicit and decided declaration, that we never would sign the treaty, without the article securing to us the fisheries. There were but four of us, Adams, Franklin, Jay, and Laurens (Jefferson never dared to cross the Atlantic before the peace); two against two could make no treaty. Peace was indispensable for Great Britain; France, Spain, Holland, armed neutrality, desolation of commerce, manufactures, and consequently agriculture, revenue, scarcity of seamen, &c., &c., all conspired to produce despair in England and exultation in France and Spain; Lord George Gordon's rebellion, too. In such a moment, Oswald, Whitefoord, Fitzherbert, and, I believe, Strachy too, after long and tedious deliberation among themselves, in a separate apartment, came to us, and announced their consent to the article relative to the fisheries, which was the only article which had not been settled long before.[1]

Upon such terms did we live with Great Britain then, and upon such terms do we live with her now; and upon such terms shall we live, till we have a naval power capable of protecting her as well as ourselves. I wish I could amalgamate oil and water; I wish I could reconcile the interests, passions, prejudices, and even the caprices of Britons and Americans. But I have despaired of it more than sixty years, and despair of it still. *Ratio ultima Rerum-publicarum* must ultimately decide.

Wounds, deadly wounds have been inflicted on both sides. Contempt and disgrace never can be forgotten by human nature, and hardly, very hardly forgiven by the sincerest and devoutest Christianity.

Your letter has suggested every thing on both sides of the great question. It shall not be lost to your country, nor to yourself. Posterity, at least, will give you credit. This is cold comfort, I know by experience; but you will have neighbor's fare.

[1] See the full account of this, written at the time, in the Diary, Vol. iii. pp. 333–335. The only difference among the American commissioners seems to have been upon making the admission of the right a *sine qua non* in the treaty.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 26 March, 1815.

1. I now[1] inclose to you the original Spanish letter to me, dated Falmouth, 10th May, 1798, from Don Pedro Josef Caro, apologizing for his not coming to me in person.

2. I next inclose a translation of Pedro's letter to Pickering, dated Falmouth, 10th May, 1798.[2]

March 18th. Last night I received your favor of the 14th, with the inclosures. I have been and still am desirous, that you should see the original documents in this great and profound political intrigue, for the *pretended*, *ostensible* independence of South America. They throw some light on the policy of England and France, and the dupery of Spain, at the same time that, in my conscience, I believe, as I have always believed, that they prove to a demonstration the wisdom of my missions to France.

But before I proceed, Mr. Lloyd, I must settle some preliminaries with you.

1. I have no insidious design of drawing from you any opinion on any facts stated, or inferences or conclusions drawn, by me. You may reserve all your judgments. I only wish to furnish you with evidence, which I believe you never could derive from any other source.

2. I pray you to take your own time to answer or acknowledge my letters. I wish not to interfere with a moment of business or amusement. My object is to convince you, that my missions to France were not less dictated by deliberate prudence, than compelled by cogent necessity.

3. You can never "trespass on my time or retrospection;" both at your service; neither is of any value to me, but as it may possibly at some time be of some use to the public or to posterity. There is not a fact in my memory that I will not reveal to you, if you ask it.

[1] In a preceding letter, dated 9th March, Mr. Adams had inclosed a translation of General Miranda's letter to him, printed in Vol. viii. of this work, p. 569.

[2] Omitted, because printed in Vol. viii. p. 584. What follows, seems to have been written earlier, but inclosed in the same letter.

4. I ask your pardon for translating Miranda's letter. I believed that you understood the language; but was not certain, and thought it not amiss to furnish you with the sense in which I understand it. I will now inclose to you, Sir, the remainder of the South American packet, with a request that you will return it to me with the same punctuality that you have observed in all my former communications.

1. A magnificent confederation, association, platform, or conspiracy, call it which you will, of three great personages to separate all South America from Spain, erect an independent empire over that vast region, under the form of a federative republic; and these three great personages were Don Josef del Pozo y Sucre, Don Manuel Josef de Salas, and Don Francisco de Miranda. This was certified to me by Miranda.

2. The "Pouvoirs" signed and sealed by Josef del Pozo y Sucre, Manuel Josef de Salas, and Francisco de Miranda.

I need not proceed further, Mr. Lloyd! Here is enough to furnish a volume of reflections. Nay, if you were to pursue all the investigations and speculations that these papers suggest, you might write as many folios as Priestley or Voltaire ever produced. I read all these papers over and over, with great and very serious attention; and the oftener I read them, the more my astonishment was increased. After mature deliberation, I knew not whether I ought to laugh or to weep. In the sequel, laugh I did, most heartily; weep I did not, for I too cordially despised the whole business to cry over it. Give me leave to recapitulate the heads of my speculations or reveries upon that occasion.

1. What was to be done with these papers? What was the dictate of my duty? We are at peace with Spain. We are engaged in a friendly demarcation of the limits between their territories and ours; negotiations are in train for compensation for spoliations on our commerce, with a fair prospect of an amicable termination. Is it my duty to communicate these documents to Yrujo, the Spanish minister?

No, surely not. I cannot be obliged to act the part of a spy, a sycophant, or informer, to Spain or any other nation or government. Besides, what good can come of it? None, but to expose Miranda to the guillotine in France, and his associates to the rack or the stake in Spain or Spanish America. Besides, what

fuel would these papers have thrown into the flames, the volcano of European politics and wars at that time!

Should I communicate them to Mr. Liston, the British minister? Surely not. If Mr. Liston had received any instructions from Mr. Pitt, it was his duty to impart them to me.

Should I transmit them to the Senate and House in Congress? No. This would give the greatest possible publicity. And what could Congress do with them? Should I summon the heads of departments, lay the packets before them, and ask their opinion and advice? No. I wanted none of their advice in so plain a case. Who ever thought of summoning a board of mathematicians to deliberate upon the question, whether two and two are equal to four? So intuitively obvious and certain was the answer to every question that I could imagine relative to the subject, that my judgment was made up as soon as I had read the despatch. If the British minister should present a memorial in the name of his master to the Secretary of State, proposing the tripartite alliance, I should instantly dictate the answer to the Secretary, very civilly and respectfully apologizing for declining the engagement on account of the juvenility of our nation, the infancy of our government, the instability of our financial establishments, the aversion of our people to war, the difficulty of raising men, the vastness, difficulty, and uncertainty of the enterprise, and the want of powers and authority in the agents for South America; and, above all, as it would be a departure from our established system of policy, a neutrality in all the wars of Europe as long as we could preserve it.

My reflections did not stop here. What was I to think of Mr. Pitt and the British cabinet? Was it possible that Miranda should be such a conjurer as to bewitch Mr. Pitt and his colleagues into a serious belief, that South America was to be revolutionized so easily by Miranda and his two Jesuits? Did they believe the South Americans capable of a free government, or a combination of free federative republics, according to Miranda's plan? Or did Mr. Pitt deliberately project an insidious plan to dupe me into a rash declaration of war against France, and a submissive alliance, offensive and defensive, with him? Does he think me as raw, awkward, and ignorant a boy as I know him to be? If he does, he will find himself mistaken.

Having despatched the great and renowned Mr. Pitt in this laconic style, my next inquiry was, who and what is Miranda? He is either an Achilles, hurt by some personal injury, real or imaginary, by being deprived of his girl, as likely as any thing else that we know, who has adopted the maxim of so many other heroes, "*Jura negat sibi lata, nihil non arrogat armis;*" or he is a knight-errant, as delirious as his immortal countryman, the ancient hero of La Mancha. In the next place, what could I think of Don Josef y Pozo y Sucre and Don Manuel Josef de Salas? I knew nothing about them but that they were Jesuits. And what were Jesuits? Ask Pascal in his Provincial Letters. Spain had abolished the order, and these might be taking vengeance for their imaginary wrongs. They might boil with revenge against the king of Spain for abolishing their order. They were certainly corrupted by British mercenary policy. But what was I to think of Don Pablo de Olavide? Here was a fact, a history, a secret, unknown to Pitt, King, Miranda, and all their Jesuits. The fact is, I personally knew Olavide, his history, his character. I had been in company with him at festive convivial dinners with the Duke Rochefoucauld, the hereditary representative of the famous Sully, the bishop of Langres, a brother of the great Lamoignon, a duke and a peer, who had assisted at the coronation of the King at Rheims, where the holy oil had been poured on the royal head; that holy oil which was brought down from heaven in the bill or the claws of a pigeon.

Olavide was an old man, had been in Spain a great man, a member of the Council of Seville, &c. A head stuffed with learning, and curiosity insatiable. Touched with the contagious heresy of the holy church philosophy, of which Voltaire was the sovereign pontiff, he had suffered to escape him sentiments which alarmed the Inquisition. He was obliged to fly, as the Count d'Aranda had been, to France, as an asylum from the persecutions of the Court and the Inquisition in Spain. In Paris, he was tormented with ennui; he knew not what to do with himself. He told me, "*mes momens ne sont pas si courts.*" He went daily to the mesmeric experiments. I heard him say, he saw there miracles as inexplicable as those of the Abbé Paris in a former century.

One of the highest frolics I ever enjoyed was with this Ola-

vide, at a dinner with the highest characters in France, ecclesiastical and civil,[1] in which the question was discussed between Olavide and me of an alliance, offensive and defensive, between North and South America. The history of it would be as diverting as the feast of Plato. You will see with what eagerness Miranda and his associates courted Olavide to join them, and you will see the total neglect and contempt of them shown by Olavide. I was confident he had too much sense to have any connection with them. They never could get him to meet them, or to answer their invitations. This Olavide afterwards hit upon the happy expedient of translating from French into Spanish a work in favor of Christianity, which appeased the wrath of the Inquisition, and procured his return to Spain.[2] But who were the "Junta" in Spain? Who were the Junta in South America? Whom did Miranda and his two Jesuits represent? Where were their full powers?

I will not fatigue you with too much speculation at once. I beg you to read the inclosed papers, and I will soon again trespass on your patience with a few more of my lucubrations.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 27 March, 1815.

Let me put a case like a lawyer. Suppose Samuel Adams, John Dickinson, Patrick Henry, and Christopher Gadsden, had been enterprising and romantic enough in 1773 to go to France, and propose to the Duc de Choiseul a triple alliance between the crowns of France and Spain and the United, or to be United, States of North America. What would the duke have said? "Gentlemen, show me your full powers! Whom do you represent?" "Oh!" say the American patriots, "the people are uneasy, ardent to throw off the yoke of Great Britain. A few ships of the line and a few thousand men from France and Spain will

[1] See the Diary, vol. iii. p. 362.

[2] A curious account of this person's life up to 1782, is given by Diderot, from papers furnished by a Spaniard. It is found in the Literary Correspondence of Baron de Grimm, vol. xi. p. 233.

unite all North America; they will instantly rise, renounce Great Britain, become independent, and enter into an eternal alliance, offensive and defensive, with France and Spain." What would the duke have said? "Gentlemen, this is a deep, dangerous, and difficult subject. It interests the whole globe. I myself pretend not to fathom the depth of it. But you show me no authority. You have no powers; you represent nobody. You appear to us only in the light of rebels and traitors to your lawful sovereign. Return, then, home to your country with as little *éclat* and publicity as possible, and think yourselves very fortunate, if I do not denounce you all at St. James's as traitors and rebels to your king." That this supposition is no exaggeration, would appear from the history of the reception of Franklin, Deane, and Lee, by the Comte de Vergennes, in 1776, and till the 6th February, 1778; an epoch of great importance in the history of mankind, of which my dearly-beloved citizens of the United States are as ignorant as they are of the Sanscrit Shasta, its origin and progress. Before Franklin, Deane, and Lee appeared in France, the royal governments in America were all annihilated, Congress was sovereign and supreme, *de facto* and *de jure*, and those ambassadors had authentic records to show for every step of the progress, from 1761 to 1778. What had Miranda and two obscure, unknown, unheard of Jesuits to show? Nothing, absolutely nothing but their *ipsi dixerunt*. But, although they show no commission, no delegation, no deputation from any original power, any physical force, any animal strength, much less from any regular assemblies of people, any legitimate authority of any kind, what is the probability of their pretensions? The people of South America are the most ignorant, the most bigoted, the most superstitious of all the Roman Catholics in Christendom. They believe salvation to be confined to themselves and the Spaniards in Europe. They can scarcely allow it to the Pope and his Italians, certainly not to the French; and as to England, English America, and all other Protestant nations, nothing could be expected or hoped for any of them, but a fearful looking for of eternal and unquenchable flames of fire and brimstone. No Catholics on earth were so abjectly devoted to their priests, as blindly superstitious as themselves, and these priests had the powers and apparatus of the Inquisition to seize every suspected person and suppress

every rising motion. Was it probable, was it possible, that such a plan as Miranda's, of a free government, and a confederation of free governments, should be introduced and established among such a people, over that vast continent, or any part of it? It appeared to me more extravagant than the schemes of Condorcet and Brissot to establish a democracy in France, schemes which had always appeared to me as absurd as similar plans would be to establish democracies among the birds, beasts, and fishes. What should I think of Mr. King? My disposition was very good to make a plausible apology for him. He might think it, and, indeed, it might be his duty to transmit this information to me. I could not, however, avoid remarking a little enthusiastic leaning in favor of the sublime project, and more symptoms of credulity than became a cautious and wary statesman. I did not, however, reflect with any severity upon Mr. King. Had Miranda's powers been unexceptionable, his associates known, and Mr. Pitt made an official proposal of such a triple alliance, could I for one moment have deliberated on the question, whether I should accept it or not? Certainly not. Britain had not then displayed all her omnipotence in the Nile, at Copenhagen, or Trafalgar. France, Spain, Holland, Denmark, and Russia, had naval forces, some of them dangerous and powerful. These would require all the naval and military forces of Britain to defend her own island and watch the hostile fleets of her enemies, which were all the maritime powers of Europe. But had Mr. Pitt, in complaisance to the great Miranda, sent ten ships of the line to South America, who would have had the advantage? Most certainly the South Americans would have been in favor of Spain and France. And as certainly the North Americans, too, even though Adams, Washington, Hamilton, and Pickering had been ever so strenuous and enthusiastic advocates and partisans and allies of the great Miranda.

If I looked at home, I was to send four or six thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry to South America. And for what? To make of Miranda a king Theodore or a Pascal Paoli. Where could I get six thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry? We had them not; and in my opinion we could not obtain them. I had before had sufficient experience of the difficulty of recruiting regular soldiers in the United States.

Where should we find transports? What would be the interest of money? Had we not had rebellions enough against taxes? And were we not threatened with more and greater, and even with division, disunion, dismemberment, a dissolution of the constitution, and a total anarchy? Miranda's project is as visionary, though far less innocent, than that of his countryman Gonzalez, of an excursion to the moon in a car drawn by geese trained and disciplined for the purpose. Such were my reflections. In my next you shall know the insignificant result of all these meditations, from, &c.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 29 March, 1815.

In my last, I promised you the result of all my deliberations on this great subject. It was this, "What shall I do with these papers?" The answer was, "Lock them up in my desk, and there let them be." I did accordingly lock them up, and there they lay till I had forgotten them; and there they would have remained to this hour, if the Edinburgh reviewers first, and Bristed after them, had not implicated Mr. King and me in their ignorant and nonsensical speculations and censures.

Pickering, without consulting me, had sent a letter to Knox, and another to Hamilton. I presumed both were from Miranda. I believed Knox to have too sound and sober a judgment to be seduced into any folly by Miranda. I never thought it worth while to ask him a question about the letter or the subject. Very probably Madam Knox can produce the original letter. What Miranda had written to Hamilton, I neither knew nor cared. Hamilton's answer, however, has been intercepted somewhere among Miranda's papers, and published to the world in some magazine or review that I have seen, but do not now possess. He says, "We have an army of twelve thousand men"[1] — (by the way, more than half exaggeration) — "He must refer to the government;" and concludes with, "You know

[1] The words are, "We are raising an army of about twelve thousand men." *Hamilton's Works*, vol. vi. p. 348.

my sentiments." This, you see, was sagacious policy enough, and would have given me no alarm, if I had seen the letter in its time. But I knew nothing of it, and thought nothing about it. My imagination was amused with very different pictures. Seven thousand men and two thousand horses, crowded into transports in the Gulf stream, bound to South America, two thirds of them, within a fortnight after their landing, dead with the rot, the jail fever, the yellow fever, or the plague, and their fathers and mothers, wives and children, brothers and sisters, weeping and wailing their losses, and cursing John Adams as a traitor to his country, and a bribed slave to Great Britain, — a Deane, an Arnold, a devil!

After all, Mr. Lloyd, I must go a step further, and with frankness and candor acknowledge a truth, a principle, an opinion, and a system, in which I have great doubts whether you will concur with me. For full forty years, three points have been settled in my mind after mature deliberation.

1. That neutrality in the wars of Europe is our truest policy; and to preserve this, alliances ought to be avoided as much and as long as possible.

But, if we should be driven to the necessity of an alliance,

2. Then France is our natural ally; and,

3. That Great Britain is the last power, to which we should, in any, the last extremity, resort for any alliance, political or military.

These three propositions appear to me as clear, as obvious, and as demonstrable as any political principles whatever, and almost as any proposition in Euclid.

Miranda's plot, Mr. Pitt's plot, and Mr. Hamilton's plot (if, indeed, he had any hand in it), was in direct opposition to my system, and wholly subversive of it. On the one hand, I was determined not to submit to the insolence and injuries of the French government; on the other, to enter into no alliance with Great Britain, nor any kind of connection that might embarrass us in making peace with France, whenever her government should come to her senses and show a disposition to do us justice.

Very fortunately for me and for this nation, the French Directory had a lucid interval, and gave me a fair opportunity to institute that mission to France, *que vous flétrissez*, that mission

to France which you describe as the "*great shade in my Presidential escutcheon*," and which I wish to inscribe on my gravestone; and which, if we had escutcheons in this country, I would contrive to introduce into mine. I would rather have it there than seventeen quarters of marquises and dukes, princes, kings, or emperors. I would not exchange it for the name of Bowdoin or Baudoin, the most splendid name that I have read in history, far superior to Bourbons or Guelphs. *Sic transit gloria.* Far greater than Medicis or Napoleons; almost equal to those of Hercules and Mahomet.

On April 10th, 1809, I commenced in the Boston Patriot a series of letters in vindication of my missions to France. These letters were imprudently published in pamphlets. If you have ever seen one of them, you must remember that ninety-five pages of it are devoted to a vindication of my missions to France. If you have never seen it, I pray you to look it up; and, if you cannot find it, I will send it to you. I had done with it forever, as I thought. I wished never to see it or hear of it again. But a grandson of mine, not yet fourteen years of age, has picked them up and bound them in a volume. I have borrowed it of him, and if you cannot find it elsewhere, I will lend it to you, upon condition that you will return it to me, for I know of no other copy. After that publication, I did not expect to see a slur cast upon my missions to France by any man of intelligence and honor.

Will you linger and loiter with me a little in this place? Did Mr. Pitt and Mr. Miranda believe me to be a lover of revolutions, deeply smitten with their charms, ready and eager to seize upon any and every opportunity to involve myself and my country in any revolutionary enterprise? I had been plunged head and ears in the American revolution from 1761 to 1798 (for it had been all revolution during the whole period). Did Mr. Pitt and Mr. Miranda think that I had trod upon feathers, and slept upon beds of roses, during those thirty-seven years? I had been an eye-witness of two revolutions in Holland; one from aristocracy to a mongrel mixture of half aristocracy and half democracy, the other back again to aristocracy and the splendid restoration of the Stadtholder. Did Mr. Pitt and Mr. Miranda think that I was so delighted with these electric shocks, these eruptions of volcanoes, these *tremblemens de terre*, as to

be ambitious of the character of a chemist, who could produce artificial ones in South America? I had been an ear-witness of some of the first whispers of a revolution in France in 1783, 1784, and 1785, and had given all possible attention to its rise and progress, and I can truly say, that it had given me as much anxiety as our American revolution had ever done. Could Mr. Pitt and Mr. Miranda believe me so fascinated, charmed, enchanted, with what had happened in France, as to be desirous of engaging myself and my country in most hazardous and expensive and bloody experiments to excite similar horrors in South America?

The last twenty-five years of the last century, and the first fifteen years of this, may be called the age of revolutions and constitutions. We began the dance, and have produced eighteen or twenty models of constitutions, the excellences and defects of which you probably know better than I do. They are, no doubt, the best for us that we could contrive and agree to adopt.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 30 March, 1815.

I need not say any thing about our constitutions, or the difficulties that have been experienced to reconcile the people to them, or the dangerous diversities of opinion, in the construction of them, or the dissatisfaction with them, the uneasiness under them, or the perpetual projects to alter and amend them.

Since we began the career of constitutions, the wisest, most learned, and scientific heads in France, Holland, Geneva, Switzerland, Spain, and Sicily, have been busily employed in devising constitutions for their several nations. And brilliant compositions they have produced, adorned with noble sentiments in morals, wise maxims in politics, if not sound doctrines in religion and salutary precepts in private life. But has there been one that has satisfied the people? One that has been observed and obeyed, even for one year or one month? The truth is, there is not one people of Europe that knows or cares any

thing about constitutions. There is not one nation in Europe that understands or is capable of understanding any constitution whatever. *Panem et aquam, et vinum et circenses* are all that they understand or hope or wish for. If there is a colorable exception, it is England. On this subject, I scarcely dare to write, speak or think. Once loose the spirit of democratical revolution, and the three kingdoms will rival France in anarchy, as triumphantly as they have in policy, commerce, naval and military power. These, Sir, were the results of ten years' careful, attentive, anxious, and (if without vanity I may use the word) philosophical observation in France, Spain, Holland, Austrian Netherlands, and England. What could I think of revolutions and constitutions in South America? A people more ignorant, more bigoted, more superstitious, more implicitly credulous in the sanctity of royalty, more blindly devoted to their priests, in more awful terror of the Inquisition, than any people in Europe, even in Spain, Portugal, or the Austrian Netherlands, and infinitely more than in Rome itself, the immediate residence of the head of the holy church.

I did not say, as my old friend Lord St. Vincent did, though I thought as much. You cannot understand this without an anecdote of General Moreau, who related, that Fulton carried from Mr. Pitt to Lord St. Vincent a recommendation to his lordship to try the experiment of Fulton's projects, to blow up ships by machinery under water. The only answer that the old lord-admiral gave to Fulton, was, "Pitt is a damned fool, and I will have nothing to do with your project." The story, which I had from our Commodore Rogers, who, I understood, heard it from Moreau's own mouth, was embellished with many beautiful circumstances, infinitely more worthy to be transmitted to posterity than the letters of that mixture of Napoleon, Petrarch, and Werter, Lord Nelson.

But I have not yet stated all my reflections upon this subject. Had Mr. Pitt thought of the consequences of opening a navigable canal across the isthmus to the South Sea? Who was to have the jurisdiction and dominion of that canal? What would be the effect of an independent, free government in South America? Could common sense in South America not think of a navy? No country has greater advantages for commerce and naval power. What would soon happen in Hindostan and in

China, if a communication of commerce, navigation, and naval power was opened between South America and the East Indies? What is to become of the East India Company and the British possessions? Where is this ignorant, thoughtless boy leading his king and country? I am apprehensive you will think me as mad now as I then thought Pitt and Miranda. But my reading and observations on men and nations were then fresher in my head than they are now; and I assure you, I am not conscious of having insinuated a thought to you in this correspondence, that did not pass through my mind upon reading and considering those despatches from Mr. King and Miranda.

Should I have any thing to do in the business? No! If both houses of Congress, and Washington and Hamilton, should all agree in an address to me, advising and requesting me to engage in such a Quixotic attack of a windmill, I never would put my hand to it. I would resign my office, retire to Braintree, follow my plough, and leave the nation to follow its own wisdom or folly.

It was impossible not to perceive a profound and artful plot hatching in England, France, Spain, South and North America, to draw me into a decided instead of a *quasi* war with France, Spain, Holland, and all the enemies of England, and a perpetual alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain; or in other words, to entangle us forever in all the wars of Europe. This plot I was determined to resist and defeat, if I could; and accordingly I embraced the first overtures from France to make peace with her upon terms honorable and advantageous to the United States. This was completely effected. In my letters in the Boston Patriot before referred to, from April 10th, 1809, to June 10th, 1809, you will see the history of the rise and progress of the negotiations with France, which led to that happy conclusion.[1] On the subject of that happy conclusion, I have a few words hereafter to say. Meantime, what shall I do with these letters and the subject of them? I have no inclination to publish them. They will remain in my letter-book, to enable my children to apologize for my memory. You are at liberty to quote them hardily whenever and wherever

[1] Vol. ix. pp. 241 – 310, of the present work.

you please. You may show them, or print them, if you will. And I will give an account of all the reason that is in me to any gentleman, who in his proper name shall ask me any questions about them. If they were all printed in a pamphlet, I should admire to read an Edinburgh or Quarterly review of it. If I could see Mr. Bristed, I would ask him to print them as an appendix to the second edition of his Hints. Shall I send the documents to our Historical Society? to our Antiquarian Society? or to the Historical Society of New York, where, I believe, they would be more welcome? or shall I still keep them locked in my desk?

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 31 March, 1815.

Before I proceed to St. Domingo, I have a few words more to say. And, after all, I expect to forget and omit more than half that I ought to say. In my last, I hinted at the happy conclusion of the peace with France in 1801, and its fortunate effects and consequences. Here, Sir, I must ask indulgence. I cannot repent of my "strong character." Whether I have one or not, I know not. I am not conscious of any character stronger than common. If I have such a nature, it was given me. I shall neither be rewarded nor punished for it. For all my foibles, strong or weak, I hold myself responsible to God and man. I hope to be forgiven for what I humbly acknowledge I cannot justify, and not be too severely censured for what, in my circumstances, "*humana parum cavet natura.*" I did not humble France, nor have the combined efforts of emperors and kings humbled her, and, I hope, she never will be humbled below Austria, Russia, or England. But I humbled the French Directory as much as all Europe has humbled Bonaparte. I purchased navy yards, which would now sell for double their cost with compound interest. I built frigates, manned a navy, and selected officers with great anxiety and care, who perfectly protected our commerce, and gained virgin victories against the French, and who afterwards acquired such laurels in the Mediterranean, and who have lately emblazoned

themselves and their country with a naval glory, which I tremble to think of. God forbid that American naval power should ever be such a scourge to the human race as that of Great Britain has been! I was engaged in the most earnest, sedulous, and, I must own, expensive exertions to preserve peace with the Indians, and prepare them for agriculture and civilization, through the whole of my administration. I had the inexpressible satisfaction of complete success. Not a hatchet was lifted in my time; and the single battle of Tippecanoe has since cost the United States a hundred times more money than it cost me to maintain universal and perpetual peace. I finished the demarcation of limits, and settled all controversies with Spain. I made the composition with England, for all the old Virginia debts, and all the other American debts, the most snarling, angry, thorny, *scabreux* negotiation that ever mortal ambassador, king, prince, emperor, or president was ever plagued with. I say I made it, and so I did, though the treaty was not ratified till Jefferson came in. My labors were indefatigable to compose all difficulties and settle all controversies with all nations, civilized and savage. And I had complete and perfect success, and left my country at peace with all the world, upon terms consistent with the honor and interest of the United States, and with all our relations with other nations, and all our obligations by the law of nations or by treaties. This is so true, that no nation or individual ever uttered a complaint of injury, insult, or offence. I had suppressed an insurrection in Pennsylvania, and effectually humbled and punished the insurgents; not by assembling an army of militia from three or four States, and marching in all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war, at an expense of millions, but silently, without noise, and at a trifling expense. I pardoned Fries; and what would a triumphant, victorious, and intoxicated party, not to say faction, under the "command-in-chief" of John Randolph, have done with honest Judge Chase and Judge Peters, if I had hanged him? But I am not about to laugh off this question. What good, what example would have been exhibited to the nation by the execution of three or four obscure, miserable Germans, as ignorant of our language as they were of our laws, and the nature and definition of treason? Pitiful puppets danced upon the wires of jugglers behind the scene or under ground. But I am

not going to make an apology here. Had the mountebanks been in the place of the puppets, mercy would have had a harder struggle to obtain absolution for them.

The verdict of a jury, and the judgment of the court, would, to be sure, have justified me in the opinion of the nation, and in the judgment of the world, if I had signed the warrant for their execution; but neither, nor both, could have satisfied my conscience, nor tranquillized my feelings. If I had entertained only a doubt of their guilt, notwithstanding verdicts and judgments, it was my duty to pardon them. But my determination did not rest upon so wavering a foundation as a doubt.

My judgment was clear, that their crime did not amount to treason. They had been guilty of a high-handed riot and rescue, attended with circumstances hot, rash, violent, and dangerous, but all these did not amount to treason. And I thought the officers of the law had been injudicious in indicting them for any crime higher than riot, aggravated by rescue. Here I rest my cause on this head, and proceed to another.

As I am not now writing a history of my administration, I will sum up all I have to say in a few words. I left my country in peace and harmony with all the world, and after all my "extravagant expenses" and "wanton waste of public money," I left navy yards, fortifications, frigates, timber, naval stores, manufactories of cannon and arms, and a treasury full of five millions of dollars. This was all done step by step, against perpetual oppositions, clamors and reproaches, such as no other President ever had to encounter, and with a more feeble, divided, and incapable support than has ever fallen to the lot of any administration before or since. For this I was turned out of office, degraded and disgraced by my country; and I was glad of it. I felt no disgrace, because I felt no remorse. It has given me fourteen of the happiest years of my life; and I am certain I could not have lasted one year more in that station, shackled in the chains of that arbitrary faction.

> Virtus, repulsæ nescia sordidæ,
> Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
> Nec sumit aut ponit secures
> Arbitrio popularis auræ.

As I had been intimately connected with Mr. Jefferson in

friendship and affection for five-and-twenty years, I well knew his crude and visionary notions of government as well as his learning, taste, and talent in other arts and sciences. I expected his reign would be very nearly what it has been. I regretted it, but could not help it. At the same time, I thought it would be better than following the fools who were intriguing to plunge us into an alliance with England, an endless war with all the rest of the world, and wild expeditions to South America and St. Domingo; and, what was worse than all the rest, a civil war, which I knew would be the consequence of the measures the heads of that party wished to pursue.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 5 April, 1815.

The halcyon days of New England prosperity were the first six years of Mr. Jefferson's administration. Was this felicity owing to the wisdom, the virtue, or the energy of Mr. Jefferson? Or was it the natural, necessary, and unavoidable effect of the universal peace and tranquillity abroad and at home, and with universal nature, civilized and savage, entailed upon him by his predecessor, in spite of friends and enemies?

Had Mr. Hamilton and his host, for he was "commander-in-chief," been good citizens, submitted to the legitimate constituted authorities, relaxed their rigid, bigoted monopolies and exclusions, suffered the executive to be independent and moderate the fury of parties, the federal administration might and would have been triumphant, might have had a navy, might have maintained their neutrality. But, alas! Hamilton would not endure it. "Othello's occupation was gone," and jealousy and Moorish revenge again stabbed and murdered Desdemona. And Deacon Phillips has called a noble block of buildings "Hamilton place," in lasting honor of Othello! Such is the honor, the dignity, the virtue, the piety, the religion, the morality, the patriotism, the philanthropy, of the head-quarters of principles, sometimes good and sometimes bad!

Such was the fall of the house that Jack built. Such the

overthrow of the lofty palace, the sublime and beautiful building that he then thought, and still thinks, he had erected and finished, though he all along knew he was building on the sand; he could only lament, as he did, that he could not find a rock. He was sometimes vain and foolish enough to please himself with visions of studies and labors to promote the felicity of the nation, by encouraging agriculture, commerce, certain manufactures, national defence, safety and security by fortifications and wooden walls, by arts and sciences, by systems of education, and by canals and roads; but he soon saw that such delights were forbidden to him, and he submitted to the decree. He thought he had answered the end of his creation, as far as he could see any use of his existence upon earth, and was content it should come to an end, physically or politically, if it was the pleasure of the Supreme Ruler.

But I cannot relieve you yet. You must read a little more curious history. There is extant a volume in print, Boston, 1810, published by Edward Oliver, 70 State street, "The history of Don Francisco de Miranda's Attempt to effect a Revolution in South America," with a very apt motto from Shakspeare, "Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot unlikely wonders." If ever more unlikely wonders were plotted in this world than those plotted by Pitt, Miranda, and King, I have never read them in history or romance. There is not an Arabian tale more extravagant. This volume deserves your perusal, and so do the writings of Nimrod Hughes and Christopher Macpherson, quite as much as those of Paine, Callender, and Hamilton, for without them you never can know the character of your country and its government. I shall leave this volume to your perusal, and proceed to something which has harrowed up my soul and all its feelings. I neither know, nor suspect, nor have ever heard of a conjecture, who the author of this history is. I know not whether I had heard a rumor, retired as I was, of the arrival of Miranda in America, when I received a letter from Dr. Rush, informing me that General Miranda had been in Philadelphia, had visited him, dined with him, and given him an account of the politics of all the courts of Europe, as familiarly as if he had been in the inside of all the kings and princes. Miranda was then upon his return from Washington, where he had conversed with Jefferson and Madison, and Rush assured

me that Miranda had assured him that we should have no war with Spain. I thought little more of the matter. I considered Miranda as a vagrant, a vagabond, a Quixotic adventurer, and cared no more about him than about Abraham Brown or Parson Austin.

How can I proceed in the narration? The next news I heard was that Miranda had sailed a fortnight or three weeks before, with a military and naval armament to set South America free; and that my grandson, W. S. Smith, had been taken from college, when senior sophister, on the point of taking his degree, and sent with Miranda to liberate South America. What do you think were my sensations and reflections? I shudder to this moment at the recollection of them. I saw the ruin of my only daughter, and her good-hearted, enthusiastic husband, and had no other hope or wish or prayer than that the ship, with my grandson in it, might be sunk in a storm in the Gulf stream, where I had myself been for three days in momentary danger and expectation of perishing in 1778, eight-and-twenty years before!

I had never the most distant intimation or suspicion of this expedition, till I heard it had been at sea for weeks. I can truly say, that information that the ship had gone to the bottom would at the same moment have been an alleviation of my grief. I gave up my grandson as lost forever. But what could I think of his father? Was he more mad than Pitt or King?

In course of time, news came that my grandson was in prison at Caraccas, with many of his companions, waiting for trial and execution. Yrujo, who had known me in Europe and America, came forward with an offer to interpose for a pardon for my grandson. I took no notice of it. No! My blood should flow upon a Spanish scaffold, before I would meanly ask or accept a distinction in favor of my grandson. No! He should share the fate of his colleagues, comrades, and fellow-prisoners. Colonel Smith answered Yrujo in a style that atoned in some measure for his previous imprudence, in a language consistent with his professed principle, however erroneous, in the whole enterprise; in short, in the tone of the elder Brutus, when he sacrificed his sons for conspiring with Tarquin.

When Mr. Bristed, in his "Broad Hints," announced John Adams as the defeater of Mr. Pitt's and Mr. King's projects for

separating South America from Spain, I printed in the Patriot a short apology for my conduct, and some of the documents I have sent you. In consequence of that publication, I soon received the letter and paper, which I will now inclose to you with the request that you will return them to me. The letter is dated "Baltimore, June 7th, 1810," and signed "B. Irvine, Edit. Whig." The object of the letter was, as it professed to be, "to obtain farther information on the subject of Miranda's project, and the designs of the British ministry, or rather the reason why the valuable information communicated by me to the public relative to that project was so long withheld, to the injury of Mr. Jefferson's character, and to the danger of the commonwealth." Inclosed with this letter was the newspaper called the Whig, of June 7th, 1810, in the second column of the second page of which you will find a paragraph, headed "An explanation wanted," in which I am called to an account, somewhat rudely and impertinently, and by implication, at least, charged or suspected of aiming to waft my son into place, and restore myself to favor.

I have never answered this letter, nor acknowledged its receipt, nor taken any notice of it or its Whig. Who was this Mr. Irvine? Who his honest inquirers? What authority had they to catechize me? Did they think that I had courted the mission of my son to Russia? I had infinitely rather he had remained at home in his private station. I could have told them, that a general suspicion ran through the continent, which indeed prevails to this day, that he was sent away as a dangerous rival, too near the throne. What favor had I to restore myself to? What have I to restore myself to? What favor have I ever asked of government or people? Never once since I came out of my mother's womb. Miranda's expedition from New York was infinitely better known to Jefferson and Madison than to me. I never had the least intimation or suspicion of it, till he had been three weeks at sea.

I will also inclose an estimate in Spanish, sent me by Miranda, of the Spanish dominions in South America, with a translation in English, made by a Spanish gentleman, a governor of Chili, who said the estimate was very low. All those regions, however, were to become republican under our confederation!

TO RICHARD RUSH.

Quincy, 5 April, 1815.

Your two letters of the 27th ultimo have been received, with the inclosures, for all which I thank you.

You ask "some reflections of my own." My dear Sir, it would require a folio volume to give you the histories, dissertations, and discussions which you require. How can I, *sans* eyes, *sans* hands, *sans* memory, *sans* clerks, *sans* secretaries, *sans* aids-de-camp, *sans* amanuensis, undertake to write folios?

Let me ask you, Mr. Rush, is the sovereignty of this nation a gift? a grant? a concession? a conveyance? or a release and acquittance from Great Britain? Pause here and think. No! The people, in 1774, by the right which nature and nature's God had given them, confiding in original right, and original power, in 1774 assumed powers of sovereignty. In 1775, they assumed greater power. In July 4th, 1776, they assumed absolute unlimited sovereignty in relation to other nations, in all cases whatsoever; no longer acknowledging any authority over them but that of God Almighty, and the laws of nature and of nations. The war from 4th of July, 1776, to 30th of November, 1782, six years and some months, was only an appeal to Heaven in defence of our sovereignty. Heaven decided in our favor; and Britain was forced not to give, grant, concede, or release our independence, but to acknowledge it, in terms as clear as our language afforded, and under seal and under oath.

Now, Sir, they say that the late war has annihilated our treaty of 1782, and its definitive in 1783. Let me ask, has it annihilated our independence and our sovereignty? It has annihilated our sovereignty as effectually as it has any one particle of our rights and liberties in the fisheries. We asked not our independence as a grant, a gift, a concession from Great Britain. We demanded, insisted upon it as our right, derived from God, nature, and our own swords. The article in the treaty ought to have been, "The United States have been for seven years, now are, and of right ought to be free, sovereign, and independent States." But it was not thought necessary to hurt the delicacy of royal or popular feelings by language so emphatical, though so literally true.

Now, Sir, does not the article relative to the fisheries stand upon the same foundation with that of our independence? We claim and demand the fisheries in their utmost extent, from God and nature and our own swords, as we did our independence. And we will have them, God willing.

Neither nature nor art has partitioned the sea into empires, kingdoms, republics, or states. There are no dukedoms, earldoms, baronies, or knight's fees, no freeholds, pleasure grounds, ornamented or unornamented farms, gardens, parks, groves, or forests there, appropriated to nations or individuals, as there are upon land. Let Mahomet, and the Pope, and Great Britain say what they will, mankind will act the part of slaves and cowards, if they suffer any nation to usurp dominion over the ocean or any portion of it. Neither the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the four seas, or the North Sea, are the *peculium* of any nation. The ocean and its treasures are the common property of all men, and we have a natural right to navigate the ocean and to fish in it, whenever and wherever we please. Upon this broad and deep and strong foundation do I build, and with this cogent and irresistible argument do I fortify our rights and liberties in the fisheries on the coasts as well as on the banks, namely, the gift and grant of God Almighty in his creation of man, and his land and water; and, with resignation only to the eternal counsels of his Providence, they never will and never shall be surrendered to any human authority or any thing but divine power.

You will accuse me of the bathos, if I descend from this height to any inferior ground; but the same rights from the same source may be deduced and illustrated through another channel.

2. We have a right — (I know not very well how to express it) — but we have the rights of British subjects. Not that we are now British subjects; not that we were British subjects at the treaty of 1783, but as having been British subjects, and entitled to all the rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities of British subjects, which we had possessed before the revolution, which we never had surrendered, forfeited, or relinquished, and which we never would relinquish any farther than in that treaty is expressed. Our right was clear and indubitable to fish in all places in the sea where British subjects had fished or ever had a right to fish.

3. We have a stronger and clearer right to all these fisheries

in their largest extent than any Britons or Europeans ever had or could have, for they were all indebted to us and our ancestors for all these fisheries. We discovered them; we explored them; we settled the country, at our own expense, industry, and labor, without assistance from Britain or from Europe. We possessed, occupied, exercised, and practised them from the beginning. We have done more towards exploring the best fishing grounds and stations, and all the harbors, bays, inlets, creeks, coasts, and shores, where fish were to be found, and had discovered by experiments the best means and methods of preserving, curing, drying, and perfecting the commodity, and done more towards perfecting the commerce in it, than all the Britons, and all the rest of Europe.

4. We conquered Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, dispossessed the French, both hostile and neutral, and did more, in proportion, towards the conquest of Canada, than any other portion of the British empire; and would and could and should have done the whole, at an easier expense to ourselves, both of men and money, if the British government would have permitted that union of colonies, which we projected, planned, earnestly desired, and humbly petitioned. In short, we had done more, in proportion, towards protecting and defending all these fisheries against the French, than any other part of the British empire. For all these reasons, if there is a people under heaven who could advance a claim or a cŏlor of a pretension to any exclusive privileges in the fisheries, or any rights in one part of the old British empire more than another, that people are the inhabitants of the United States of America, especially of New England. But we set up no claims but those asserted and acknowledged in the treaty of 1783. These we do assert, and these we will have and maintain.

As you ask my opinion, it is that stipulations in acknowledgment of antecedent rights, in affirmance of maxims of equity and principles of natural and public law, if they are suspended during war, are revived in full force on the restoration of peace. Former treaties, not formally repeated in a new treaty, are presumed to be received and acknowledged. The fisheries are therefore ours, and the navigation of the Mississippi theirs, that is the British, as much as ever. I will answer any question you may ask.

TO JAMES LLOYD.

Quincy, 24 April, 1815.

I have not yet treated your letters to me, which I esteem above all price, with the respect they deserve, nor indeed with common civility. I cannot but hope, that in the great order of things, which we for the moment are so apt to think confusion, some good may accrue to our country from this correspondence.

In your favor of February 6th, 1815, you have given a proverb, a maxim of more value to the statesmen of this nation than diamonds. "The progress of the horseman can only be proportioned to the speed of his horse." Had Hamilton, the "commander-in-chief" of both houses of Congress, of all the five heads of departments of General Washington, and consequently of the President of the United States, been aware of your principle, and acted upon it, the revolution of 1801 would not have happened. There is no rodomontade, no exaggeration, Mr. Lloyd, in this language. In essence, it is strictly true.

Your allusion to the trial of Captain Preston and his soldiers, touches me more nearly than you can imagine. To this hour my conduct in it is remembered, and is alleged against me to prove that I am an enemy to my country, and always have been. It was one of those cases, of which I could give you the history of many, in which my head or my heart, and perhaps a conspiracy of both, compelled me to differ in opinion from all my friends, to set at defiance all their advice, their remonstrances, their raillery, their ridicule, their censures, and their sarcasms, without acquiring one symptom of pity from my enemies.

I could give you several other anecdotes, curious enough, perhaps memorable, of the same kind, which, if you wish to read them, shall be at your service. At present, I will confine myself to one.

After the battles or skirmishes of Concord and Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775, the militia of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, marched to Cambridge, Roxbury, Medford, Charlestown, &c., to drive the British army into the sea; and if their first ardor had not been restrained by considerations *of the Union of the Colonies*, they would have done it.

When, in the beginning of May, Congress met, no man knew whether the skirmish at Concord, the battle of Lexington, or the assembly of an army of militia at Cambridge and the other neighborhood of Boston, in hostile array against his Majesty's regular, disciplined, and veteran troops and fleets, would be approved or condemned by that continental assembly. Those who had been members the year before, that is, in 1774, and now met the same gentlemen again, I assure you had great reasons for doubts and apprehensions, fears and jealousies.

The army at Cambridge had poor arms, no cannon but the Hancock and Adams, no tents, no barracks, no provisions but from day to day, no clothing for change, no magazines, very little powder, and but few balls. Congress could not be brought to look the crisis in the face. It was easy to see that the members dared not, either on the one hand, to command or advise the assemblage about Boston to disperse and go home, or on the other, to approve and adopt it as a continental army. A majority of them lived in hourly expectation of news, that the British troops had marched out of the town of Boston, and scattered the militia of New England, at Cambridge, to the four winds. For the opinion, that four or five thousand regulars could march where they pleased in America, was not peculiar to parliament or ministry. As many believed it in this country, in proportion, as in England. But when days and weeks passed away, and instead of any such intelligence, all accounts agreed that the Britons were completely imprisoned in the town, they began to think what must be done, and the people began to be clamorous that something should be done. Should they give up the contest? No. The people, at least the Whigs, out of doors, and in their own colonies, would stone them. Should they adopt the army at Cambridge, or raise a new one of their own? This last project would require a long time, and it was very uncertain whether it would ever be practicable. If they adopted the army now on foot, who should command it? A New England army under a New England General, they were pleased to say, would be dangerous to the other colonies, for no man then dared to utter the word *State* or *nation*. Who, then, should be General? On this question, the members were greatly divided. A number were for Mr. Hancock, then President of Congress, and extremely popular

throughout the United Colonies, and called "King Hancock" all over Europe. A greater number (can you believe it?) were for General Charles Lee, then in Philadelphia, extremely assiduous in his visits to all the members of Congress at their lodgings, and universally represented in America as a classical and universal scholar, as a scientific soldier, and as one of the greatest generals in the world, who had seen service with Burgoyne in Portugal and in Poland, &c., and who was covered over with wounds he had received in battles. In short, this General Lee was a kind of precursor of Miranda. He excited much such an enthusiasm, and made as many proselytes and partisans. A number were for Washington. But the greatest number were for Ward.

In the midst of this chaos, the Massachusetts delegates daily received letters from their friends and constituents at home, entreating them to urge Congress to a decision, for the army wanted many things, and every thing was uncertain. The anxiety of New England, and her members in Congress, may be well imagined, may be easily conceived. In this state of things, John Adams, who had previously taken unwearied pains with his own colleagues, and with other members, in private, to form some plan and agree upon something to be done, without success, met Samuel Adams in the State House yard in Philadelphia, from various walks and avocations. "What shall we do to get Congress to adopt our army?" said Samuel Adams to John Adams. "I will tell you what I am determined to do," said John to Samuel. "I have taken pains enough to bring you to agree upon something, but you will not agree upon any thing, and now I am determined to take my own way, let come what will come." "Well," said Samuel, "what is your scheme?" Said John to Samuel, "I will go to Congress this morning, and move, that a day be appointed to take into consideration the adoption of the army before Boston, the appointment of a General, and officers; and I will nominate Washington for commander-in-chief." [1]

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From this narration it appears, that Washington was the *creature of a principle*, and that principle was the *Union of the*

[1] The account which follows is a mere amplification of that given in the Autobiography, vol. ii. pp. 416 – 418, and omitted on that account.

Colonies. He knew it, and it is not wonderful that he preached union. But is it not wonderful that one party should now found their arguments in favor of union, principally on the authority of Washington, and that the other party, in his name, and under pretence of his authority, should intrigue and cabal the destruction of the Union? Good God! Is there a man or woman in the United States, of common sense and information, who wants the authority of Washington to prove the necessity of Union? Is there one who can abuse the name of Washington, to influence a separation or division? From this narration it also appears, that the boast of your correspondent, Mr. Randolph, is vain and unfounded. We owe no thanks to Virginia for Washington. Virginia is indebted to Massachusetts for Washington, not Massachusetts to Virginia. Massachusetts made him a general against the inclination of Virginia. Virginia never made him more than a colonel.

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Would Mr. Randolph now say, that John Adams was "ill-omened" in his exertions to get Washington appointed a general, not only against the judgment and inclinations of his own colleagues, but of the most respectable and able of the delegates from Virginia herself?

Is there, Mr. Lloyd, in the history of nations an example of submission to a mere point of policy, to be compared to the compliance of New England, their general, their army and all its officers, with an arrangement, which placed a total stranger over the heads and bodies of them all? At a moment, too, when they were flushed with victory at Bunker's Hill? For a victory indeed it was, the most important event, and to this day, the most glorious action in the history of North America. It gave unshaken confidence to the people, from New Hampshire to Georgia, in their own valor, which nine tenths of them to that hour had doubted. It was not owing to any want of sensibility, I assure you, Sir, that no public remonstrance was made, and no public murmurs heard. Poor John Adams, upon his return to the army and his constituents, had enough to do to apologize for the part he had taken in the change. "Was there ever known, in the history of the world, an instance of changing the commander-in-chief of an army in the sight of an enemy, and in hourly expectation of another battle more bloody

and desperate than the first? Was it not unexampled to supersede a general, a commander-in-chief, universally esteemed, beloved and confided in by his army and their country, by appointing another, an entire stranger, whom they had never seen, whose name they had scarcely heard? Was there another army or country that would submit to it? Was it not astonishing that a high-spirited, independent militia had not shouldered their firelocks and marched home? or at least refused to receive the new commander? Was it not to have been expected, that the officers would have resigned their commissions, when such a flight of officers of high rank, all strangers, was sent and placed over them? How could you, in such critical circumstances, assist in putting the cause of your country at such imminent hazard?"

These questions, Mr. Lloyd, and many other questions of similar import, were put to me wherever I went, by my best friends, and I had no other way to soften their hard thoughts, but by appeals to their patriotism, by urging the policy and necessity of sacrificing all our feelings to the union of the colonies, and by panegyrics upon Washington, Lee, Gates, Mifflin, Reed, &c. In a few words, I was subjected to almost as bitter exprobrations for creating Washington commander-in-chief, as I had been, five years before, for saving Preston and his soldiers from an unrighteous judgment and execution. Are not these facts as new to you as any political tale that could be brought you from Arabia, or by a special messenger from Sirius, the dog-star?

Should I take the oath of Thuanus, the great martyr to the faint ideas of his age, of religious liberty, "*Pro veritate historiarum mearum Deum ipsum obtestor*," would you believe me? It is sufficient for me to say that the facts are true, and I attest them with my hand.

TO THOMAS McKEAN.

Quincy, 6 July, 1815.

Your friendly letter of the 1st of this memorable month, bearing in the handwriting, the sentiments, and the arrangement,

every mark of undecayed vigor of mind and body, while it delights me in every other point of view, mortifies me by a comparison with my own quivering infirmities, which make it painful and difficult for me to write.

The history of mankind, as far as we can trace it, is full of wonders, and the greatest wonder of all is, the total destruction of all the monuments and memorials by which we could have formed a correct and impartial judgment of characters and events. The present question before the human race, that great democratical tribunal, is whether the *jus divinum* is in men or in magistrates; in human nature or in instituted offices; in human understanding or in holy oil; in good sense and sound morality, or in crowns, sceptres, crosses, and Episcopal and Presbyterian ordination. When and where shall we date the commencement of these struggles? I fear it must be from the death of Abel. But, to leap over all former ages and nations, shall we begin with Constantine and the council of Nice? With Clovis? With the Crusades? With the wars of the Hussites? With Luther? With Charles V., Louis XIV.? Shall we recollect the Waldenses, the powder plot, the Irish massacre, St. Bartholomew's day, Robespierre, or Equality, the Duke of Orleans, or his predecessor, the Regent of France, and his Mississippi bubble? Shall we come down to Napoleon and the grand council at Vienna? These are all

"Bubbles on the sea of matter borne."

The question is still before the democratical tribunal of the human race. Is the Court as yet sufficiently enlightened to give a verdict and judgment, and according to law? Will the verdict be in favor of Zinzendorf, or Swedenborg, or Whitefield, or Wesley, or Hopkins, or Priestley, or Voltaire? Philosophy and religion will still mix with politics, and both, like matter, are infinitely indivisible. As the mariners say, "I can yet see no blue sky." Your parallel between John and J. Q. is amusing enough. Whether it will continue a step or two farther, is a question before the democratical tribunal, and there I leave it. But I have a presentiment, that if it should be protracted for a leap or two, it will end in a perfect resemblance of disgrace, contempt, or neglect.

Mr. Madison's administration has proved great points long disputed in Europe and America.

1. He has proved, that an administration under our present Constitution can declare war.

2. That it can make peace.

3. That money or no money, government or no government, Great Britain can never conquer this country or any considerable part of it.

4. That our officers and men by land are equal to any from Spain and Portugal.

5. That our trans-Alleghanian States, in patriotism, bravery, enterprise, and perseverance, are at least equal to any in the Union.

6. That our navy is equal, *cæteris paribus*, to any that ever floated.

In a few minutes I shall be elevated to your honorable rank of an octogenarian.

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.

Philadelphia, 13 July, 1815.

I have read D'Argens' Ocellus, Timæus, and Julian. Instead of being sincere, he appears to me to be a consummate hypocrite, in the beginning, the middle, and the end; the most frank, candid, impudent, and sincere liar I ever read. It is plain that he believed neither Old Testament nor New, neither Moses nor Jesus. He labors to destroy the credibility of the whole Bible, and all the evidence of a future state, and all this for the sake of establishing the infallibility of the Pope and the church, the necessity of forbidding the Bible to the people, and placing all religion in grace, and its offspring, faith. Among all the disciples of Loyola, I never read a more perfect Jesuit. He is a complete exemplification of Condorcet's "precious confessions," as you called them. You speak of his "superficial reflections." I have not found them. They are all deep, and aiming at the same end, a complete system of Antichristianity. No epic poem, no dramatic romance, not even Don Quixote himself, ever amused me more. Call him not superficial; his Greek and his Latin are remarkably correct, his reading is immense, his system pursued with undeviating uniformity.

I thank you for your letters to Mr. Everett, who, I believe, will not disgrace you or me. Frederic's works are in my library over the way. But I have lost my George,[1] who alone could look them up, and I am too indolent to go in search of them. Indeed, I have no great veneration for the hero, — not more than for Napoleon. He was more "superficial" than D'Argens.

You ask, "What! have you more grandchildren about you?" Yes, I have four pretty little creatures, who, though they disarrange my writing-table, give me much of my enjoyment. Why, you seem to know nothing about me. I have grandchildren and great grandchildren, multiplying like the seed of Abraham. You have no idea of the prolific quality of the New England Adamses. Why, we have contributed more to the population of North America, and cut down more trees, than any other race; and I hope will furnish hereafter, if they should be wanted, more soldiers and sailors for the defence of their country.

If, as our friend De Gyselaer says, "it were lawful to envy," I should envy Mrs. Vanderkemp, her children and grandchildren, their delicious meeting. It must be as delightful as any thing we find in this pleasant world, as I call it. I cannot call it "a vale of tears." This is false philosophy and false Christianity. If it is at any time a vale of tears, we make it such.

My friend, what opportunities have I had to do good things, and how few have I done! I am ashamed, I grieve, I am mortified and humiliated, at the recollection of what I have been and where I have been. Yet, I have done nothing to reproach myself with. I have done all in my power to do, and have been overwhelmed by a dispensation, uncontrollable by any talents or virtues I possessed.

My friend, again! the question before mankind is, — how shall I state it? It is, whether authority is from nature and reason, or from miraculous revelation; from the revelation from God, by the human understanding, or from the revelation to Moses and to Constantine, and the Council of Nice. Whether it resides in men or in offices. Whether offices, spiritual and temporal, are instituted by men, or whether they are self-created and instituted themselves. Whether they were or were not

[1] A grandson, who had lived in his family until now.

brought down from Heaven in a phial of holy oil, sent by the Holy Ghost, by an angel incarnated in a dove, to anoint the head of Clovis, a more cruel tyrant than Frederic or Napoleon. Are the original principles of authority in human nature, or in stars, garters, crosses, golden fleeces, crowns, sceptres, and thrones? These profound and important questions have been agitated and discussed, before that vast democratical congregation, mankind, for more than five hundred years. How many crusades, how many Hussite wars, how many powder plots, St. Bartholomew's days, Irish massacres, Albigensian massacres, and battles of Marengo have intervened! *Sub judice lis est.* Will Zinzendorf, Swedenborg, Whitefield, or Wesley prevail? Or will St. Ignatius Loyola inquisitionize and jesuitize them all? Alas, poor human nature! Thou art responsible to thy Maker and to thyself for an impartial verdict and judgment.

"Monroe's treaty!" I care no more about it than about the mote that floats in the sunbeams before my eyes. The British minister acted the part of a *horse-jockey.* He annexed a *rider* that annihilated the whole treaty.

You are "a dissenter from me in politics and religion." So you say. I cannot say that I am a dissenter from you in either, because I know not your sentiments in either. Tell me plainly your opinions in both, and I will tell you, as plainly, mine. I hate polemical politics and polemical divinity as cordially as you do, yet my mind has been involved in them sixty-five years at least. For this whole period I have searched after truth by every means and by every opportunity in my power, and with a sincerity and impartiality, for which I can appeal to God, my adored Maker. My religion is founded on the love of God and my neighbor; on the hope of pardon for my offences; upon contrition; upon the duty as well as necessity of supporting with patience the inevitable evils of life; in the duty of doing no wrong, but all the good I can, to the creation, of which I am but an infinitesimal part. Are you a dissenter from this religion? I believe, too, in a future state of rewards and punishments, but not eternal.

You have again read Tacitus. What do you think of his religion, his philosophy, his morality? When Nero wished he could cut off the heads of the whole Roman empire with one stroke of his falchion, was this sentiment dictated by tyranny

or philosophy, or humanity? And if any man should wish he could cut off the head of every Frenchman, Englishman, or Russian, at one blow, would he not be as wise, as benevolent, and philosophical? And those who wish they could decapitate Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, are they wiser or better?

As I did not expect to hear again from that manly character, my respected and beloved friend, De Gyselaer, your communication has been very delightful. Tell him, that although the affairs of my country have been administered in many respects very differently from my system, yet they have not been upon the whole so ill conducted as I fear he has been taught to believe. We have made advances, we have acquired glory, we have gained confidence in our Union, our Constitution, and our administration.

If I had good eyes and fingers, I could write you sheets, if not volumes; but I must soon cease to write at all, even the name of

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THOMAS McKEAN.

Quincy, 30 July, 1815.

Who shall write the history of the American Revolution? Who can write it? Who will ever be able to write it? The most essential documents, the debates and deliberations in Congress, from 1774 to 1783, were all in secret, and are now lost forever. Mr. Dickinson printed a speech, which he said he made in Congress against the declaration of independence; but it appeared to me very different from that which you and I heard. Dr. Witherspoon has published speeches, which he wrote beforehand, and delivered *memoriter*, as he did his sermons. But these, I believe, are the only speeches ever committed to writing. The orations, while I was in Congress, from 1774 to 1778, appeared to me very universally extemporaneous, and I have never heard of any committed to writing, before or after delivery.

These questions have been suggested to me by a review in the Analectic Magazine for May, 1815, published in Philadel-

phia, p. 385, of the Chevalier Botta's "*Storia della guerra Americana.*" The reviewers inform us, that it is the best history of the revolution that has ever been written. This Italian classic has followed the example of the Greek and Roman historians, by composing speeches for his generals and orators. The reviewers have translated one of Mr. R. H. Lee, in favor of the declaration of independence. A splendid morsel of oratory it is; how faithful, you can judge.

I wish to know your sentiments and opinions of this publication. Some future Miss Porter may hereafter make as shining a romance of what passed in Congress, while in conclave, as her Scottish Chiefs.

Your friend, *durante vitâ.*

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 24 August, 1815.

If I am neither deceived by the little information I have, or by my wishes for its truth, I should say that France is the most *Protestant* country of Europe at this time, though I cannot think it the most reformed. In consequence of these reveries, I have imagined that Camus and the Institute meant, by the revival and continuance of the *Acta Sanctorum*, to destroy the Pope and the Catholic church hierarchies, *de fond en comble*, or in the language of Frederic, Voltaire, D'Alembert, &c., "*écraser le miserable*," "crush the wretch." This great work must contain the most complete History of the Corruptions of Christianity that has ever appeared, Priestley's not excepted, and his History of Ancient Opinions not excepted.

As to the history of the revolution, my ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular. What do we mean by the revolution? The war? That was no part of the revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington. The records of thirteen legislatures, the pamphlets, newspapers in all the colonies, ought to be consulted during

that period, to ascertain the steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the authority of parliament over the colonies. The Congress of 1774 resembled in some respects, though I hope not in many, the Council of Nice in ecclesiastical history. It assembled the priests from the east and the west, the north and the south, who compared notes, engaged in discussions and debates, and formed results, by one vote and by two votes, which went out to the world as unanimous.

Mr. Madison's notes of the Convention of 1787, are consistent with his indefatigable character. I shall never see them, but I hope posterity will.

That our correspondence has been observed, is no wonder, for your hand is more universally known than your face. No printer has asked me for copies, but it is no surprise that you have been requested. These gentry will print whatever will sell; and our correspondence is thought such an oddity by both parties, that they imagine an edition would soon go off, and yield them profits. There has, however, been no tampering with your letters to me. They have all arrived in good order.

Poor Bonaparte! Poor devil! What has and what will become of him? Going the way of King Theodore, Alexander, Cæsar, Charles XII., Cromwell, Wat Tyler, and Jack Cade; that is, to a bad end. And what will become of Wellington? Envied, hated, despised by all the barons, earls, viscounts, marquises, as an upstart, a *parvenu*, elevated over their heads (for these people have no idea of any merit but birth), Wellington must pass the rest of his days buffeted, ridiculed, scorned, and insulted by factions, as Marlborough and his duchess did.[1] Military glory dazzles the eyes of mankind, and for a time eclipses all wisdom, all virtue, all laws, human and divine; and after this it would be bathos to descend to services merely civil or political.

Napoleon has imposed kings upon Spain, Holland, Sweden, Westphalia, Saxony, Naples, &c. The combined emperors and kings are about to retaliate upon France, by imposing a king upon her. These are all abominable examples, detestable precedents. When will the rights of mankind, the liberties and in-

[1] This prediction has by no means been justified by the event. No man ever lived and died more honored by his country.

dependence of nations be respected? When the perfectibility of the human race shall arrive at perfection. When the progress of Manilius's *ratio* shall have not only

"Eripuit cœlo fulmen Jovisque fulgores,"

but made mankind rational creatures. It remains to be seen whether the allies were honest in their declaration, that they were at war only with Napoleon.

Can the French ever be cordially reconciled to the Bourbons again? If not, who can they find for a head? The infant, or one of the generals? Innumerable difficulties will embarrass either project.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 13 November, 1815.

The fundamental article of my political creed is, that despotism, or unlimited sovereignty, or absolute power, is the same in a majority of a popular assembly, an aristocratical council, an oligarchical junto, and a single emperor. Equally arbitrary, cruel, bloody, and in every respect diabolical. Accordingly, arbitrary power, wherever it has resided, has never failed to destroy all the records, memorials, and histories of former times, which it did not like, and to corrupt and interpolate such as it was cunning enough to preserve or to tolerate. We cannot therefore say with much confidence what knowledge or what *virtues* may have prevailed in some former ages in some quarters of the world.

Nevertheless, according to the few lights that remain to us, we may say that the eighteenth century, notwithstanding all its errors and vices, has been, of all that are past, the most honorable to human nature. Knowledge and virtue were increased and diffused; arts, sciences, useful to men, ameliorating their condition, were improved more than in any former equal period.

But what are we to say now? Is the nineteenth century to be a contrast to the eighteenth? Is it to extinguish all the lights of its predecessor? Are the Sorbonne, the Inquisition, the In-

dex expurgatorius, and the Knights-errant of St. Ignatius Loyola to be revived and restored to all their salutary powers of supporting and propagating the mild spirit of Christianity? The proceedings of the allies and their Congress at Vienna, the accounts from Spain and France, and the Chateaubriands, and the Genlis, indicate which way the wind blows. The priests are at their old work again; the Protestants are denounced, and another St. Bartholomew's day threatened. This, however, will probably, twenty-five years hence, be honored with the character of "*the effusions of a splenetic mind, rather than as the sober reflections of an unbiased understanding.*"

I have received Memoirs of the life of Dr. Price, by William Morgan, F. R. S. In page 157 and 185, Mr. Morgan says, "So well assured was Dr. Price of the establishment of a free constitution in France, and of the subsequent overthrow of despotism throughout Europe, as the consequence of it, that he never failed to express his gratitude to Heaven for having extended his life to the present happy period, in which, after sharing the benefits of one revolution, he had been spared to be a witness to two other revolutions, both glorious. But some of his correspondents were not quite so sanguine in their expectations from the last of these revolutions, and among these the late American ambassador, Mr. John Adams. In a long letter, which he wrote to Dr. Price at this time, so far from congratulating him on the occasion, he expresses himself in terms of contempt in regard to the French revolution; and after asking rather too severely, what good was to be expected from a nation of atheists, he concludes with foretelling the destruction of a million of human beings, as the probable consequence of it. These harsh censures and gloomy predictions were particularly ungrateful to Dr. Price; nor can it be denied, that they must have then appeared as the effusions of a splenetic mind, rather than as the sober reflections of an unbiased understanding."

I know not what a candid public will think of this practice of Mr. Morgan, after the example of Mr. Belsham, who, finding private letters in the cabinet of a great and good man, after his decease, written in the utmost freedom and confidence of intimate friendship by persons still living, though after the lapse of a quarter of a century, produces them before the world. Dr. Disney had different feelings and a different judgment. Find-

ing some cursory letters among the papers of Mr. Hollis, he would not publish them without my consent. In answer to his request, I submitted them to his discretion, and might have done the same to Mr. Morgan. Indeed, had Mr. Morgan published my letter entire, I should not have given him nor myself any concern about it. But as in his summary he has not done the letter justice, I shall give it with all its faults.[1]

Mr. Morgan has been more discreet and complaisant to you than to me. He has mentioned respectfully your letters from Paris to Dr. Price, but has given us none of them. As I would give more for those letters than for all the rest of the book, I am more angry with him for disappointing me than for all he says of me, and my letter, which, scambling as it is, contains nothing but sure words of prophecy.

THOMAS McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 20 November, 1815.

I can now answer the questions in your favor of the 30th of July last, namely, "Who shall write the history of the American Revolution, &c.?"

Major-General James Wilkinson has written it. He commences with the battle of Bunker's or Breed's hill, at Boston, and concludes with the battle near New Orleans, on the Mississippi, a period of forty years. It will be published in three volumes, large octavo, each containing about five hundred pages.

The General, I am informed, confines himself to military transactions, with a reference to a very few of the civil. I knew him personally nearly forty years ago, but have not seen or heard from him for the last seven years. I think him above mediocrity. He has been in the army during the whole time, and is better qualified to give a description of its proceedings, than any gentleman with whom I am acquainted.

This history has been written within the last seven or eight

[1] See the letter to Dr. Price, vol. ix. p. 563.

months, at Germantown, about six miles from this city, though I have not heard of the General being there until lately; he has kept himself quite retired and private.

I do not recollect any *formal* speeches, such as are made in the British Parliament and our late Congresses, to have been made in the revolutionary Congress, though I was a member for eight years, from 1774 until the preliminaries of peace were signed. We had no time to hear such speeches; little for deliberation; action was the order of the day. The speech of Mr. Richard H. Lee, given by the Italian, the Chevalier Botta, which I have read, may have been delivered, but I have no remembrance of it, though in Congress, nor would it do any member much credit. I have no favorable opinion of the Chevalier; he appears to me a vain and presuming character to have attempted such a history; perhaps the *res angustæ domi* (poverty) impelled him.

Although we may not in the United States have a Thucydides, a Tacitus, Hume, Robertson, or Gibbon, who have been reckoned the best historians in Greece, Rome, or Great Britain, yet we have gentlemen of great talents, and capable of writing the history of our Revolution with at least as much regard to truth as any of them has exhibited.

With respect to General Wilkinson, I recollect an anecdote. He was, in 1777, an aid to General Gates, and by him sent to Congress at Yorktown, in Pennsylvania, with the despatches, giving an account of the surrender of Sir John Burgoyne and the British army to the Americans at Saratoga. On the way he spent a day at Reading, about fifty miles from Yorktown, with a young lady from Philadelphia, whom he afterwards married. When the despatches were read in Congress, propositions were made for paying a proper compliment to the favorite of General Gates, who brought us such pleasing news. Governor Samuel Adams, with a grave and solemn face, moved Congress, that the young gentleman should be presented with "a pair of spurs."

What changes in Europe have occurred since I had the pleasure of writing to you last! Louis XVIII. is again on the throne of France; the great Napoleon at the bottom of the wheel, never to rise more, a prisoner for life. The French nation miserable: Spain has re-established the tribunal of the

Inquisition, and restored the Jesuits. The rulers of Portugal void of common sense. South America in a state of opposition to the government of Spain, and in all appearance will soon be independent of it. Whatever is, is right, said Mr. Pope, the first of poets and moralists.

I have nothing to do with politics, nor much with any thing else in this world, but I hear and listen. It is said, that James Monroe, Secretary of State, John Armstrong, late Secretary at War, Dewitt Clinton, late Mayor of New York, and perhaps Rufus King, now a senator, will be proposed as candidates for the next Presidency. I do not think the prospect of either, or any of them, very encouraging.

Mr. John Q. Adams has been named; but it is not known whether this may not create jealousy, or injure him with the present administration, which his friends would by all means avoid.

My sheet is almost finished. God bless you.

Your old friend,

Tho's McKean.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 20 November, 1815.

The pamphlet I lent you, and the letters from Governor McKean, you may retain for the time you mention. The pamphlet I would give you, if I had or could procure another. The rise and progress of that pamphlet is this. On my return from Philadelphia, in November, 1774, I found that Mr. Draper's Massachusetts Gazette had been long pouring forth torrents of scurrility against the Whigs, and dreadful denunciations of the irresistible power of Great Britain, and her implacable vengeance against any resistance to her government over us in all cases whatsoever. Among this mass of billingsgate and terror, I soon distinguished the hand of my bosom friend, Jonathan Sewall, then Attorney-General and Judge of Admiralty for Halifax, over the signature of Massachusettensis. This gentleman had been the most intimate and familiar friend I ever had at the bar, and had been as ardent an American and as explicitly

for resistance to Great Britain, in arms, as I ever had been or ever have been; but the insolvency of his uncle, the Chief Justice Sewall, to whose estate he was administrator, induced him to petition the legislature for a grant to enable him to pay the debts of his deceased uncle.

Colonel Otis, of Barnstable, and his son, the great Boston orator, statesman, and patriot, had not supported his petition with as much zeal as he wished, and his resentment of their *nonchalance* became bitter. Hutchinson, Trowbridge, and Bernard, soon perceived this ill humor, and immediately held out to him prospects of honor, promotion, and wealth. They created a new office for him, that of Solicitor-General, and upon the death of Mr. Gridley made him Attorney-General, and soon after procured for him from England the office of Judge of Admiralty for Halifax, with a salary of three hundred pounds sterling per annum. Such was the character of Massachusettensis.[1] He had a subtle, insinuating eloquence that often gained slowly and imperceptibly upon his hearers, but none of that commanding, animating energy, that vehemence of enthusiasm, that sometimes carries all before it. Draper's paper, I found, distressed the Whigs, and spread alarms and terrors among the people; and none of the writers half so much as Massachusettensis. I set myself about preparing some antidote against his poison, and began, I believe, in December, 1774, and continued weekly till the 19th of April, 1775, a series of papers under the signature of Novanglus, in Edes and Gill's Boston Gazette. Coarse and rough as they are, like every thing else that has ever been published by me, who never had time to polish, correct, or transcribe any thing, they were sent to England in the Boston Gazette, I never knew by whom, picked up by Almon, the famous printer and bookseller, and printed by him in a volume of Prior Documents, which followed his Remembrancer for the year 1775, under a title which he gave them, much too pompous, of "History of the Disputes, &c." Stockdale, who had been an apprentice of Almon, afterwards reprinted them, under Almon's title, in the pamphlet I sent you. You may find them in the Boston Gazette, from December, 1774, to 19th April,

[1] It is almost needless to repeat, that Mr. Adams before his death had occasion to alter his opinion on the authorship of Massachusettensis. Probably Daniel Leonard wrote it. See vol. iv. p. 10, note.

1775, or in Almon's Prior Documents; but of Stockdale's pamphlet I know of no copy in America but mine, and one that Judge Trumbull, of Hartford, has.

I thank you for the prospectus. From all I have heard or read of your sons, I believe them to have a genius for letters as well as for the fine arts, and wish them success in all their laudable pursuits; but I cannot subscribe.

The proposal of taking my bust, can only make me smile. If your son had proposed it, I would have written him a letter too ludicrous for you to read, describing the portraits and busts which have already transmitted me to posterity.

TO THOMAS McKEAN.

Quincy, 26 November, 1815.

Your favor of the 20th revives me. A brother octogenarian, who can write with such vigor of hand and mind, excites a kind of emulation even in these old veins.

A history of the first war of the United States is a very different thing from a history of the American Revolution. I have seen in France a military history of France during the reign of Louis XIV., by the Marquis of Quincy. This work was held in high esteem by military men, but it was nothing like a history of the reign of that monarch. General Wilkinson may have written the military history of the war that followed the Revolution; that was an effect of it, and was supported by the American citizens in defence of it against an invasion of it by the government of Great Britain and Ireland, and all her allies, black, white, and pied; but this will by no means be a history of the American Revolution. The revolution was in the minds of the people, and in the union of the colonies, both of which were accomplished before hostilities commenced. This revolution and union were gradually forming from the year 1760 to 1775. The records of the British government, and the records of all the thirteen colonies, and the pamphlets, newspapers, and handbills of both parties must be examined, and the essence extracted, before a correct history can be written of the American Revolution.

I agree with you, that General Wilkinson's talents are by no means inconsiderable. His openness of soul, and a little too much pomp, have as usual made him enemies and given them advantages. I do not recollect that my impatience was ever wrought up to a higher pitch than by the total failure of all intelligence, official and unofficial, from Saratoga, for so long a time after we had heard a confused, fugitive rumor of the defeat of Burgoyne. Wilkinson, according to your anecdote, which I never heard before, seems to have put an amorous construction on the precept, *cedant arma togæ*. Had I known that he had fallen in love at Reading with so fine a woman as his after wife really was, my rigorous heart would have somewhat relented.

I remember a jocular suggestion thrown out in a private conversation, in which Mr. Samuel Adams and Mr. Hancock were present, on the morning after Wilkinson's arrival and before Congress met, that it would be proper to present the courier with a horsewhip and a pair of spurs; but I never before heard that a motion was actually made in Congress, in jest or in earnest, to that purpose. I must have been absent at that moment upon some committee.

Awakenings and revivals of religion always attend the most cruel extremities of anarchy, despotism, and civil war. They have brought again the Pope and all his train of Jesuits, Inquisitions, Sorbonnes, massacres, &c. The pendulum swings as far on one side as on the other. You and I should be convinced that our friend, Governor Adams, was in the right when he said, that anarchy was better than tyranny, because it was of shorter duration, if we did not know that anarchy is always followed by more permanent despotism.

Washington and Jefferson have introduced a custom of retiring after eight years, and Madison, it is said, will follow their example. I am not enamored with this practice. I may be wrong.

I have heard the names you mention, and Governor Tompkins, of New York, added to them. I can only conjecture; but I presume Mr. Monroe will be nominated by the republicans, and Mr. King by the federalists. The event cannot be doubtful in your mind or mine. A Vice-President will probably be sought by the republicans in New York. I know not who will

be selected by the federalists, unless it be Mr. Harper, of Maryland; but in the present posture of men and things, Mr. King for President and Mr. Harper for Vice-President, will not be an equal match for Mr. Monroe for President and any one of the gentlemen of New York you have named, as Vice-President, or any respectable gentleman of Pennsylvania.

I must acknowledge I contemplate with pleasure the rising generation. As much secluded as I am from the world, I see a succession of able and honorable characters, from members of Congress down to bachelors and students in our universities who will take care of the liberties which you have cherished and done so much to support. The greatest danger is, that their numbers are so great, and their pretensions will all be so high, that rivalries pernicious to the nation and her union may arise.

The federalists will still hold up their pretensions and nominate their men, however desperate their prospect may be.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 29 November, 1815.

A history of military operations from April 19th, 1775, to the 3d of September, 1783, is not a history of the American Revolution, any more than the Marquis of Quincy's military history of Louis XIV., though much esteemed, is a history of the reign of that monarch. The revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people, and in the union of the colonies; both of which were substantially effected before hostilities commenced.

When, where, by what means, and in what manner was this great intellectual, moral, and political change accomplished? Undoubtedly it was begun in the towns of Boston and Salem, where the British government first opened their designs, and first urged their pretensions.

In the month of February, 1761, the great cause of writs of assistance was argued before the supreme judicature of the province, in the council chamber in Boston; and this important question was tainted from the beginning with an odious and

corrupt intrigue. Chief Justice Stephen Sewall, who was an enlightened friend of liberty, having great doubts of the legality and constitutionality of this projected writ of assistance, at November term, 1760, at Salem, where it was solicited by Cockle, a custom-house officer, had ordered the question to be argued before the court at the next February term in Boston; but Sewall in the mean time died, and Bernard, instead of fulfilling the promises of two of his predecessors, Shirley and Pownall, to give the next vacancy on that bench to Colonel Otis, appointed Hutchinson, for the very purpose of deciding the fate of the writs of assistance, and all other causes in which the claims of Great Britain might be directly or indirectly implicated, though Hutchinson was then lieutenant-governor, judge of probate, member of council, his brother, Oliver, secretary, and his brother, Oliver, judge of the Supreme Court; and himself furnished with no education to the law, and very little knowledge of it. When the cause came on, however, Mr. Otis displayed so comprehensive a knowledge of the subject, showed not only the illegality of the writ, its insidious and mischievous tendency, but he laid open the views and designs of Great Britain, in taxing us, of destroying our charters and assuming the powers of our government, legislative, executive, and judicial, external and internal, civil and ecclesiastical, temporal and spiritual; and all this was performed with such a profusion of learning, such convincing argument, and such a torrent of sublime and pathetic eloquence, that a great crowd of spectators and auditors went away absolutely electrified. The next May, Mr. Otis was elected by the town of Boston into the legislature, and for ten years afterwards; during the whole of which period his tongue and his pen were incessantly employed in enlightening his fellow-citizens and countrymen in the knowledge of their rights, and developing and opposing the designs of Great Britain. He governed the town of Boston and the House of Representatives, notwithstanding a few eccentricities, with a caution, a prudence and sagacity, which astonished his friends and confounded his enemies. His fame soon spread though the continent, and three or four years afterwards was emulated by Mr. Dickinson in his Farmer's Letters; and some other gentlemen in Virginia began to think.

Here, then, Sir, began the revolution in the principles, views,

opinions, and feelings of the American people. Their eyes were opened to a clear sight of the danger that threatened them and their posterity, and the liberties of both in all future generations. From Boston these alarms spread through Massachusetts and all New England; and in course to New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. A general aspiration for a union of the colonies soon followed, the first attempt at which necessary measure was made in a Congress at New York, in 1765, of which Brigadier Ruggles was President, but Mr. Otis the soul. The President and Colonel Partridge, Mr. Otis's colleagues, were devoted Hutchinsonians. The former ran away. Mr. Ogden, too, a man of great weight in the middle States, also deserted. Timidity was too general. None supported Otis with more uniformity and decision than McKean and Rodney, of Delaware. Both of those gentlemen have repeatedly told me, and Mr. Rodney more frequently, that of all the members of that body, not one appeared to be so complete a master of every subject, or threw so much light on every question, as Mr. Otis.

The rise and progress of this knowledge, the gradual expansion and diffusion of the change in the minds of the people, and the growing hopes of a union of the colonies, and their dependence upon it as the future rock of their salvation, cannot be traced but by a diligent perusal of the pamphlets, newspapers, and handbills of both parties, and the proceedings of the legislatures from 1761 to 1774, when the union of the colonies was formed.

If strength should remain, I may hereafter point to a few periods, in which knowledge made the greatest advances, and the revolution in the understanding and affections of the people made the most rapid progress.

But I must conclude at present, with an assurance of the respect and regard of your old friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. I should have candidly added, in its place, that Bernard was not bound by the promises of Shirley and Pownall; but his fault was in appointing a judge so evidently and notoriously partial as Hutchinson. Nor do I approve of Shirley's and Pownall's promises of a vacancy before it happened; a

practice very common in Europe, and too frequent in America, before and since the revolution. I never countenanced it in any one instance.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 2 December, 1815.

If I ever comply with your request, I must make haste and employ the few intervals of light which my eyes afford me.

Where is the man to be found at this day, when we see Methodistical bishops, bishops of the church of England, and bishops, archbishops, and Jesuits of the church of Rome, with indifference, who will believe that the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed fifty years ago, as much as any other cause, to arouse the attention, not only of the inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of parliament over the colonies? This, nevertheless, was a fact as certain as any in the history of North America. The objection was not merely to the office of a bishop, though even that was dreaded, but to the authority of parliament, on which it must be founded. The reasoning was this. The archbishops and bishops in England can neither locate and limit dioceses in America, nor ordain bishops in any part of the dominions of Great Britain, out of the realm, by any law of the kingdom or of any of the colonies, nor by any canon law acknowledged by either. The king cannot grant his *congé d'élire* to any people out of his realm; there is no power or pretended power, less than parliament, that can create bishops in America. But if parliament can erect dioceses and appoint bishops, they may introduce the whole hierarchy, establish tithes, forbid marriages and funerals, establish religions, forbid dissenters, make schism heresy, impose penalties extending to life and limb as well as to liberty and property. Here, Sir, opens an extensive field of investigation, even for a young historian, who might be disposed to undertake so laborious an enterprise.

The opinions, the principles, the spirit, the temper, the views, designs, intrigues, and arbitrary exertions of power, displayed

by the church of England at that time towards the dissenters, as they were contemptuously called, though in reality the churchmen were the real dissenters, ought to be stated at full length. The truth is, that the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, the Anabaptists, the Methodists, or even the Quakers, or Moravians, were each of them as numerous as the churchmen; several of them immensely more numerous, and all of them together more than fifteen to one.

In Virginia, the church of England was established by law, in exclusion and without toleration of any other denomination. The British statute, called the act of uniformity, was acknowledged as law, and carried into execution by the magistrates. It is worthy of inquiry, whether the same law was not in force in Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. In Pennsylvania, the Quakers, the Presbyterians, the German Lutherans and Calvinists, the Anabaptists, the Methodists, the Dunkers, the Mennonists, and the Roman Catholics, were so numerous, and the church of England so few, that the latter found it difficult to support their cause; and the ridiculous incurvations and tergiversations of the Proteus, Dr. Smith, and that other weaker Proteus, Duché, and the bigotry of Coombs, showed their awkward struggles to preserve their cause from contempt. White, now bishop, then young, behaved with uniform candor, moderation, and decorum.

In New York, the church of England displayed its essential character of intolerance. The royal governors, counsellors, judges, &c., had such overbearing influence, that they dared to grant large tracts of fertile lands to the churches of England, and laid the foundation of the ample riches they still hold, while no other denomination could obtain any. Even Dr. Rogers's congregation, numerous and respectable as it was, could never obtain a legal title to a spot to bury their dead. The writings of Livingston and Smith furnish evidence enough of the spirit of these times. Great exertions were made in New York to propagate Anglican Episcopacy in Connecticut; and a famous Dr. Cutler, and a more famous Dr. Johnson, and his still more celebrated son, were employed with success in that service, — with such success, indeed, that an English church and an Episcopal priest soon appeared in all the towns from New Haven to New York.

The efforts in New Hampshire and Rhode Island, though they ought to be recorded, I pass over, and hasten to Massachusetts. And here I want to write a volume. Here the clergy, and principal gentlemen among the laity, were high churchmen indeed. Passive obedience and non-resistance, in the most unqualified and unlimited sense, were their avowed principles in government, and the power of the church to decree rites and ceremonies, and the authority of the church in controversies of faith, were explicitly avowed. I know not where to begin, nor when to end. The anecdotes which I could relate as an eye and an ear-witness, would be innumerable. This north precinct of the large and ancient town of Braintree, now called Quincy, in which I was born and bred, and in which my father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, lived, died, and lie buried, was a very focus of Episcopal bigotry, intrigue, intolerance, and persecution. I could introduce here a *dramatis personæ* of names, which I will not now commit to paper, and entertain you with plots and intrigues, which would compose a comedy equal to any of Molière or Shakspeare, if corruption, prostitution, and dupery can compose a comedy. Waving this for the present, we will proceed to Cambridge. Several branches of our Braintree family of Vassals had removed and planted themselves in the very front of the university, and they must have an Episcopal church. Our Braintree family of Apthorps instantly turned their attention to that seat of the muses and dissenters. Mr. East Apthorp, hot from Oxford, and still more warmed by holy orders from Episcopal hands, returned to his native country, and soon after arose a splendid edifice, as it was then thought, which every-body immediately concluded was intended for an Episcopal palace and in time for a Lambeth. All sensible men knew that this system could not be effected but by act of parliament; and if parliament could do this, they could do all things; and what security could Americans have for life, liberty, property, or religion? The Society for Propagating the Gospel had long perverted their revenues from their original design to the support of the church of England ministers. Upon the death of Dr. Miller, of Braintree, a satirical irony appeared in a newspaper, the point of which turned upon this abuse of the society's resources. This *jeu d'esprit* soon produced an explosion. Mr.

Apthorp came out with an eloquent and zealous pamphlet. Dr. Mayhew appeared with his comparison between the charter and conduct of the society, showing their non-conformity with each other. The controversy soon interested all men, spread through America and in Europe, brought forward the aged Dr. Johnson, and at last the Archbishop of Canterbury. All denominations in America became interested in it, and began to think of the secret, latent principle upon which all encroachments upon us must be founded, the power of parliament. The nature and extent of the authority of parliament over the colonies was discussed everywhere, till it was discovered that it had none at all, a conclusion still more forcibly impressed upon the people by the Canada bill, by which the Roman Catholic religion and Popish bishops were established in that province by authority of a British parliament. The people said, if parliament can do this in Canada, they can do the same in all the other colonies; and they began to see and freely to say, that parliament had no authority over them in any case whatsoever.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 5 December, 1815.

If such was the spirit of the English church in America, and especially in Virginia, before the revolution, can you wonder that men so enlightened as Richard Henry Lee and his brothers, Patrick Henry, Chancellor Wythe, Chief Justice Pendleton, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, &c., though they had been all educated in that church, became afterwards disciples of Locke, Blackburne, Furneaux, and William Penn, and united in destroying all ecclesiastical establishments in that State?

But to return to the narration of the progress of investigation into the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of Great Britain, and especially of the authority of parliament over these North American colonies.

From 1761 to 1764, America was all alive with jealousies and apprehensions of the designs of the British ministry and their own governors and their adherents. In 1764, Mr. George

Grenville moved and carried in the House of Commons a number of fifty-five resolutions, that it would be expedient to lay taxes, particularly stamp duties, upon the colonies.

Here the cloak was thrown off, and the mask trampled under foot. Nothing in religion or government ever touched to the quick the people of all classes in any country, like taxation. The cry was, if parliament can tax us, we are undone forever, in soul, body, and estate. They can give us what religion and government they please, and do what they will with our property, persons, and consciences. Resistance to the last extremity, at whatever risk, must be made. How often have I heard in conversation in private companies, and how often was it said in the streets, "I will never live to see such acts of parliament executed in this country;" and how constantly was it echoed from man to man, "nor I," "nor I," "nor I;" and no man thought it expedient to say "I will!"

I remember to have read somewhere, I believe in the writings of Dr. Tillotson, that Providence had been pleased, in the person of Martin Luther, to raise up a bold and daring genius, a proper wedge for splitting so hard and knotty a block as the Papal usurpation upon mankind. Providence was now raising up in the person of Mr. Otis a genius, equally bold and daring, equally well tempered and qualified, as a wedge to split the knotty *lignum vitæ* block of parliamentary usurpation over the colonies.

Mr. Otis, whose tongue and whose pen had never been idle in the cause of his country, from 1761, now printed his "Rights of the Colonies Asserted and Proved," a work that was so popular, that it was read in the House of Representatives, and went out to the public under a kind of sanction from that body, who by their resolutions solemnly denied the right of parliament to tax the colonies. The next year, on the 29th of May, 1765, the same resolution was adopted in Virginia, and not long afterwards by all the other colonies. Between the denial of Massachusetts and that of Virginia, namely, on the 22d of March, 1765, the stamp act was passed.

Here, then, was a declaration of war on both sides. Here were already two nations directly and explicitly at issue concerning their fundamental laws; for if the sovereignty of the empire was vested in parliament, a denial of its right to tax the

colonies was a declaration of total independence on parliament; and the stamp act was a declaration of war against the colonies, by King, Lords, and Commons. As the King had conspired with his Lords and Commons in the treasonable invasion of the legal sovereignties of the colonies, his Majesty was, upon their principles, a rebel, a traitor, and a declared enemy, and they had a right, if they pleased, "to cashier him," notwithstanding the musical insolence of Mr. Burke against Dr. Price, in the strictest sense of the Doctor's expression. Nay, they had as clear a right to hang, draw, and quarter him, upon their principles, as he had upon his, notwithstanding his anointment with holy oil, to practise a similar inhumanity upon Samuel Adams and John Hancock, for which he has recorded to endless ages so ardent a desire.

At this period, events crowd upon my memory in such numbers, that I can only refer you to the records and journals of 1764 and 1765. Massachusetts wrote circular letters to all the colonies, requesting a general Congress. Ministerial monkery was practised in New Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, to prevent those colonies from sending delegates. Nine colonies only were represented in the Congress who met on the 7th of October, 1765. While Mr. Otis was absent upon this legation, Mr. Samuel Adams was chosen by the town of Boston, a member of the legislature of the province. If Otis was Martin Luther, Samuel Adams was John Calvin. If Luther was rough, hasty, and loved good cheer, Calvin was cool, abstemious, polished, and refined, though more inflexible, uniform, and consistent. The people in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and everywhere else, arose like a hurricane, and bore down the stamp act and the stamps, their officers and principal abettors, as nullities.

This open resistance by force was a virtual declaration, by the people of all the colonies, of their independence on parliament, and on the crown too, whenever that crown should cease to defend and protect their fundamental laws and essential liberties, and especially when it united with Lords and Commons in a plan to destroy them all. For this resistance was as decided to the executive, as it was to the legislative power of Great Britain.

The violent sensation and the profound reflection excited by

this universal hostility to the whole authority of Great Britain, setting at open defiance all its boasted power, disseminated the freedom of inquiry and the spirit of investigation into the four corners of the colonies. The principles, the objects, and the ends of government became the topics of discussion in all companies, and at the firesides of private families. Writers on the laws of nations were more read, and more definite notions of our relation to Great Britain were formed, than ever had prevailed. The opinions of the people were more unanimous at that epoch than they ever have been since. No party was yet formed against their country. A great majority of the partial friends of Great Britain would acknowledge the rectitude of the American cause, and would vote against the authority of parliament. Their last resort was to the omnipotence of Great Britain, and the imbecility of the colonies. It was a child of five years old, challenging his father to single combat. The boy was right, and the man wrong, arbitrary, cruel; but resistance was vain, and would only provoke the old gentleman to greater moroseness and more cruel severity.

It has been a question, whether, if the ministry had persevered in support of the stamp act, and sent a military force of ships and troops to enforce its execution, the people of the colonies would then have resisted. Dr. Chauncy and Dr. Mayhew, in sermons which they preached and printed after the repeal of the stamp act, have left to posterity their explicit opinions upon this question. If my more extensive familiarity with the sentiments and feelings of the people in the eastern, western, and southern counties of Massachusetts may apologize for my presumption, I subscribe without a doubt to the opinions of Chauncy and Mayhew. What would have been the consequence of resistance in arms?

Here opens an unbounded field of speculation. The condition of Britain, the state of parties in it, the state of France and Spain, the ungristled youth of George Rex, the unpopularity of his mother and preceptor, would have forced Chatham into power, and Chatham might have fallen from a more enviable height than Napoleon has in 1815.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 22 December, 1815.

You are examining me upon interrogatories. I must tell you the truth, and nothing but the truth; but to tell you the whole truth is impossible. It would require more volumes than I can calculate. I am as incapable of composing or writing them, as I am of commanding the sun to stand still. I can only note a few broken hints.

In 1765, the colonies were more unanimous than they ever have been since, either as colonies or States. No party was formed against their country. The few who voted against the general sentiment, were but a handful. The resistance in America was so universal and so determined, that Great Britain with all her omnipotence dared not attempt to enforce her pretensions. She retreated and resorted to an insidious policy. She was by long practice and habit too perfect a mistress of the maxim, "*In bello stratagemata sunt licita*," to forget it upon this critical emergency. She saw, she felt, that she could do nothing without her Chatham. He was called in to command the forlorn hope, and, at the same time, to invent the *ruse de guerre*. *Ducente* Chatham, the stamp act was repealed, and the statute passed, that "parliament was sovereign over the colonies in all cases whatsoever."[1] Such was the great Chatham, a great national minister, because he always flattered and gratified the national passion for war, victory, and conquest, but he was not a wise minister; he was not an Elizabeth's minister; he was not a Cecil. He died a martyr to his idol. He fell in the House of Lords, with the sovereignty of parliament in his mouth. Who, or which, was the most extravagant, Great Britain in openly and avowedly asserting the sovereignty of the seas, Napoleon without asserting, yet attempting to exercise the sovereignty of Europe by land, or Chatham, perishing with the sovereignty of parliament over the whole globe? For if parliament had any sovereignty beyond the realm, they had it wherever they could carry their arms and

[1] Chatham certainly favored it, but the declaratory act seems to have been a concession to the Yorke family, and to Edmund Burke's private influence over Lord Rockingham.

conquests in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, a more universal empire than Napoleon, Louis XIV., Henry IV., or Charlemagne ever usurped or assumed. When the immortal Chatham had established in the laws of his kingdom and in the minds of his people, — for they were his in a stricter sense than they were those of George the III., — his fundamental principle, that parliament was sovereign, supreme, unlimited, and uncontrollable over the colonies in all parts of the world, the ministry had recourse to address, intrigue, artifice, and stratagem. Hopes and fears, promises and threatenings, avarice and ambition, were excited; promotion, advancement, honor, glory, wealth, and power were promised; disgrace, ruin, poverty, contempt, torture, and death, were threatened; and this pious moral system was pursued with steady and invariable perseverance for ten years, that is, from 1765 to 1775. And what was their success? Blot it out, my tears! But the recording angel has noted it, and my lamentation would be vain. In the course of these ten years, they formed and organized and drilled and disciplined a party in favor of Great Britain, and they seduced and deluded nearly one third of the people of the colonies.

If you can spare the time and take the pains to inquire, you may find a catalogue in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, of names, among whom were many men of the first rank, station, property, education, influence, and power, who in 1765 had been real or pretended Americans, converted during this period to real Britons.

Let me confine myself to Massachusetts, and here to a few only of individuals. In 1764 and 1765, Harrison Gray, Esquire, treasurer of the province, and member of his Majesty's council, and Colonel Brattle, of Cambridge, also a member of his Majesty's council and colonel of a regiment of militia, were both as open and decided Americans as James Otis. In 1766, Dr. Mayhew, who had been an oracle to the treasurer, died, and left him without a Mentor. Had Mayhew lived, it is believed that Gray would never have been a refugee. But the seducers prevailed, though he had connected his blood with an Otis, by

marrying his beautiful daughter to a brother of the *Great Patriot*, James Otis, Jr.

Brattle was a divine, a lawyer, and a physician, and, however superficial in each character, had acquired great popularity by his zeal, and I must say, by his indiscreet and indecorous ostentation of it, against the measures of the British government. The two subtle spirits, Hutchinson and Sewall, saw his character, as well as Trowbridge, who had been his rival at the bar, for many years. Sewall was the chosen spirit to convert Brattle. Sewall became all at once intimate with Brattle. Brattle was soon converted and soon announced a *brigadier-general* in the militia. From this moment, the Tories pronounced Brattle a convert, and the Whigs an apostate. This rank in the militia in time of peace was an innovation, and it was instantly perceived to have been invented to take in gudgeons.

Jonathan Sewall, Daniel Leonard, and Samuel Quincy were my brother barristers at the bar, and my cordial, confidential, and bosom friends. I never, in the whole course of my life, lived with any men in more perfect intimacy. They had all been patriots as decided, as I believed, as I was. I have already hinted at the manner and means of Sewall's conversion.

Daniel Leonard was the only child of Colonel Ephraim Leonard, of Norton. He was a scholar, a lawyer, and an orator, according to the standard of those days. As a member of the House of Representatives, even down to the year 1770, he made the most ardent speeches which were delivered in that House against Great Britain, and in favor of the colonies. His popularity became alarming. The two sagacious spirits, Hutchinson and Sewall soon penetrated his character, of which, indeed, he had exhibited very visible proofs. He had married a daughter of Mr. Hammock, who had left her a portion, as it was thought, in that day. He wore a broad gold lace round the rim of his hat, he had made his cloak glitter with laces still broader, he had set up his chariot and pair, and constantly travelled in it from Taunton to Boston. This made the world stare; it was a novelty. Not another lawyer in the province, attorney or barrister, of whatever age, reputation, rank or station presumed to ride in a coach or a chariot. The discerning ones soon perceived, that wealth and power must have charms to a heart that

delighted in so much finery, and indulged in such unusual expense. Such marks could not escape the vigilant eyes of the two archtempters, Hutchinson and Sewall, who had more art, insinuation, and address than all the rest of their party. Poor Daniel was beset with great zeal for his conversion. Hutchinson sent for him, courted him with the ardor of a lover, reasoned with him, flattered him, overawed him, frightened him, invited him to come frequently to his house. As I was intimate with Mr. Leonard during the whole of this process, I had the substance of this information from his own mouth, was a witness to the progress of the impression made upon him, and to many of the labors and struggles of his mind, between his interest or his vanity, and his duty.

Samuel Quincy was born in the same town and parish with me. I was three years at college with him, and as intimate with him, as with any one there. We were sworn at the bar in October, 1758, together on the same day. He was upright at first in his views, though he meddled not much in politics; but he belonged to a club, who affected to be thought neutral, though their real propensities were all on one side. This gentleman could not escape the notice of Hutchinson and Sewall, who had married his cousin. History must search the human heart. Josiah Quincy, Jr., was by many years younger than Samuel, his brother; many years after him at college and at the bar. Possessing more energy of character, more ardor of spirit, more obstinate and patient and persevering application to study and to business, and an eloquence more popular and imposing than all his other qualities, and openly espousing the cause of his country, soon eclipsed his brother, attracted and commanded much more business, and much more important and lucrative business in his profession than his elder brother. Such a rivalry and such a jealousy was more than human nature could bear, at least in this instance. Hutchinson and Sewall perceived it. They accordingly applied their magic arts to him. He was made Solicitor-General, as successor to Sewall, and became henceforward a Tory and a refugee.

My classmate, Brown, a solid, judicious character, was once a disciple of James Otis, and a cordial supporter of him and his cause in the House of Representatives. This I know from his own lips, as well as from his recorded votes. But they

made him a Judge of the Superior Court, and that society made him a refugee. A Tory, I verily believe, he never was.

I know the grief, the resentment, and the rage that this narration will excite in many families. But I owe nothing to them, and every thing to truth. I could descend to minuter details and to many inferior examples in Boston and Massachusetts, but these may suffice for the present, as specimens or exemplifications of the arts that were employed in all the colonies for ten years, that is, from 1765 to 1775, to divide the people and form a party in favor of Great Britain. Where is the historian who can and will travel through the United States, and investigate all the similar intrigues in each of them for the same purpose? Yet, without this, the real history of the United States, and especially of their revolution, never can be written. I could crowd sheets of paper with anecdotes and names, which would surprise you, of conversions in the other States. If you insist upon it, I may hereafter give you a few of the most conspicuous names and characters. But I give you notice, that not one of your friends, the federalists, through the continent, will thank you for your curiosity.

There is another very remarkable source of historical information now totally forgotten. So unanimous were the sentiments and so universal the congenial feelings of the people of Massachusetts in 1764 and 1765, that almost, if not quite, every town in the province was aroused to instruct their representatives in the General Court; all breathing the same spirit, all decided against submission. These instructions were read in the House, and it was proposed and expected that they should be published in volumes. But the expense, and especially the repeal of the stamp act prevented it. I know not how well or how ill the records and files of our legislature have been preserved, but these documents ought now to be found somewhere. Still less do I know, how the records of towns have been kept or preserved; but these instructions ought to be in the hands of the town clerks.

There is another large tract of inquiry to be travelled in the correspondence of the committees of the town of Boston with the other towns and States, commonly called the committees of correspondence. For reasons too numerous to be stated at present, I never belonged to any of these committees, and have

never seen one of their letters, sent or received. None of them have ever been published: at least, I have never seen one. Nevertheless, I doubt not they exist. Where they are, I know not, and I never knew; indeed, I never inquired. But, in my opinion, the history of the United States never can be written till they are discovered. What an engine! France imitated it, and produced a revolution. England and Scotland were upon the point of imitating it, in order to produce another revolution, and all Europe was inclined to imitate it for the same revolutionary purposes.

The history of the world for the last thirty years is a sufficient commentary upon it. That history ought to convince all mankind, that committees of secret correspondence are dangerous machines. That they are caustics, and incision knives, to which recourse should never be had but in the last extremities of life, in the last question between life and death.

In this year, 1765, the Congress met at New York. Their proceedings must be stated; but it must also be remembered that a part of that body, very important at that time, was hostile to the business, and their influence is visible in the complexion of the results. The assembly, nevertheless, was so prominent a phenomenon as to draw the attention of other nations as well as this, to the question concerning the authority of parliament, and raised the hopes of the people to a union of the colonies, to be accomplished and perfected by future and more universal Congresses, for their defence, protection, and security.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 1 January, 1816.

From 1760 to 1766, was the purest period of patriotism; from 1766 to 1776 was the period of corruption; from 1775 to 1783 was the period of war. Not a revolutionary war, for the revolution was complete, in the minds of the people, and the union of the colonies, before the war commenced in the skirmishes of Concord and Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775.

In 1766 commenced the separation of parties. The stamp

act was repealed. Universal rejoicings had run like wildfire through the continent. But Chatham's declaratory act of the sovereignty of parliament hung like a cloud over the whole American continent. Thinking men and discerning eyes saw it, and amidst all the popular rejoicings dreaded its ominous appearance. The public opinion thought it a *brutum fulmen*, a mere device to preserve the nominal dignity of Great Britain without any intention of ever bringing it forward into action.

When the General Court met in May, Mr. Otis's services, sacrifices, and exertions had been so splendid, that the House of Representatives, by a spontaneous and almost unanimous feeling of gratitude, chose him their Speaker. Bernard negatived him. Hutchinson, without whom Bernard was nothing, was instantly believed to be the adviser to this declaration of hostility. The conviction flashed like lightning through the community, that the sovereignty of parliament was not intended to be relinquished, and that future calamities must be expected. The House of Representatives was electrified to such a degree, that when the election of counsellors came upon the carpet, Hutchinson, though Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice, and all his brother judges of the Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assizes, and general gaol delivery, were turned out of the Council, and a general looking for future troubles took place. It was now seen, that every man who espoused the cause of his country, must prepare himself for the fate of a martyr or confessor, and that every man of any consequence, who would betray his country, might expect lucrative as well as honorable rewards; honorable, I mean, in the common sense of the word in the world. It was not long before these apprehensions were confirmed. A bill was brought into parliament, imposing taxes on glass, tea, paper, colors, &c., imported into the colonies. The great Chatham was destined to

> "Close his long glories with a sigh to find
> The unwilling gratitude of base mankind."

Although his name still carried great power, the mortification arising from the loss of so much of his popularity, by his acceptance of a peerage and a pension, the unbounded licentiousness of the press in abusing him for it, and perhaps, above all, the embarrassments he had found in forming a ministry among

the factions of Rockingham, Bedford, and Bute, when his brother, Lord Temple, and even the Duke of Portland, deserted him, aggravated the natural and habitual infirmity of his constitution, and rendered him incapable of that activity in business, and that fire which inspired every-body with his own enthusiasm, which had been so conspicuous in all parts of his former life.

This new act of tyrannical taxation rekindled all the fires of opposition and resistance on this side the water. The associations against its execution were universal through all the colonies, and ought to be stated and related in detail, because they illustrate the progress of the revolution in the minds of the people, against the authority of parliament, towards a union of the colonies and a total independence on the one hand, and the progress of seduction and corruption on the other.

Another innovation was contrived, and a board of commissioners of the customs created; but the remonstrances and associations against the execution of the acts were so formidable, that the ministry thought it necessary to send a fleet and army to protect Temple, Hallowell, Paxton, Birch, and Robinson, their adherents and followers. In 1768, there appeared a general disposition to oppose their landing by force; but many gentlemen, apprehending confusion from unconcerted resistance, took measures for inviting a Convention of the province. The circumstances of this year ought to be distinctly developed, and the result of the Convention stated. The fleet was drawn up to fire upon the town, and protect the landing of those illustrious personages, the commissioners and their drunken secretary, and their defenders, the troops, which were given out to be four thousand men, though, probably, they were not half the number. These poor creatures, the soldiers, were in a forlorn condition, — no barracks, no shelter, hungry and cold. The inhabitants shut their doors, and would admit panthers and serpents as soon. The address of their officers upon this dangerous crisis, I shall never forget. They became suppliants, and appealed to humanity. Had the door of a citizen been broken, to let in the soldiers, such was the inflammation of spirits that they would all have been made prisoners before morning; but the officers had too much sense. They put themselves and their men upon the compassionate list. "The poor soldiers

were innocent. They knew not why they were sent here. Can you see your fellow-creatures perish in your streets for want of shelter?" Humanity prevailed. The troops were paraded on the common. One regiment appeared every day in Brattle Square, with their left flank before the front of the white house, where I then lived. Every morning I saw from my front windows Major Small exercising his battalion or his regiment, and admired his patient, persevering assiduity no less than the regularity of his men. What were my reflections and feelings at these sights! Poor puppets! you know nothing of the invisible hand, which dances you upon its wires! No more than the cogs and wheels of a clock, of the weights that move them, or the hand which they point to the hour. The men who understand the machinery, and are the first springs of its movement, know no more of what they are doing than you do. They are heaping up vengeance against the day of vengeance, against you, against themselves, and against unnumbered thousands of others as innocent as you. Major Small and I passed each other every day, but never spoke. Twenty years afterwards, we passed each other at public places of amusement in London, as Dido and Æneas passed each other in the shades, and never spoke. The troops lived in Boston for a few months more than a year, as the allied forces now reside in France, the blood of the inhabitants boiling with indignation, and the continent sympathizing with them. Wrangles and quarrels frequently occurred between the citizens and the soldiers; exasperation increased on both sides, till it broke out in the melancholy catastrophe of the 5th of March, 1770. Now appeared the spirit of freemen; multitudes from Boston and the neighboring towns assembled spontaneously the next day, and from day to day. Strong guards were placed in the State House, and every man appeared to be ready at the toll of a bell or the sound of a gun to turn out with his arms. The assembly applied to the governor and council. Mr. Hutchinson was Lieutenant-Governor and commander-in-chief. Colonel Dalrymple was sent for. Samuel Adams appeared in his true character. His caution, his discretion, his ingenuity, his sagacity, his self-command, his presence of mind, and his intrepidity, commanded the admiration and loud applauses of both parties. The troops were ordered to the Castle, and Lord North called them from this time "Sam Adams's two regiments."

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 5 January, 1816.

The trials of the officer and soldiers, who were indicted for the slaughter in King Street, were pending for the greatest part of the year 1770, and when they came on, consumed six or seven days each. The discussions and decisions in those cases convinced the people that they could depend on no protection against the sovereignty of parliament but Providence and their own arms. Accordingly they were found in Boston and all the neighboring towns, forming companies for voluntary military exercises. Even Salem, Marblehead, and Newbury, caught the flame, though the county of Essex, next to Worcester and Hampshire, was the last to abandon the ministry and their governors.

These trials, as important in the history of mankind as any that are recorded in the history of jurisprudence, never have been, and never can be truly, impartially, and faithfully represented to posterity. The first was taken down, and transmitted to England, by a Scottish or English stenographer, without any known authority but his own. The British government have never permitted it to see the light, and probably never will.

The second trial was taken by the same stenographer, by permission of the court, and allowed to be published. The Court allowed him to show his manuscript to the counsel. He brought it to me. Upon reading it over, I found so much inaccuracy and so many errors, that I scratched out every thing but the legal authorities and the testimonies of the witnesses. Mr. Quincy and Mr. Paine were consulted, and the result of their deliberations appears in the printed trial. Mr. Sewall, the Attorney-General, who ought, at the hazard of his existence, to have conducted those prosecutions, disappeared; and Mr. Paine and Mr. Samuel Quincy were substituted, nobody knew whether by the Court or the Attorney-General. I leave to the masters of chess to make their reflections on this curious arrangement of kings, knights, and pawns, upon the board. I speculated little on these puppetshows and idle games. "To the law and the testimony," was my only maxim. The law and the testimony prevailed, and destroyed as much of my popularity as Mr. Pitt

lost by accepting a peerage and a pension. It was instantly propagated that I had been bribed by an immense fee, to sell my country. I never uttered a word or suggested a hint alluding to fees from first to last. A single guinea was put into my hand by the Irish infant, for a retaining fee; ten guineas were offered on the first trial, and eight at the second, and accepted without looking at them, or uttering a word. These nineteen guineas were all the fees I ever received for a whole year of distressing anxiety, and for thirteen or fourteen days of the hardest labor in the trials that I ever went through. Add to all this the taunts and scoffs and bitter reproaches of the Whigs, and the giggling and tittering of the Tories, which was more provoking than all the rest.

This great event turned the attention of all the colonies to it, and the supremacy of parliament stared all men in the face. If parliament was omnipotent, could enact what statutes it pleased, and employ armies and navies, governors, counsellors, and judges to interpret them, and carry them into execution, of what use could our houses of representatives be? And what were our religion, liberties, properties, or existence worth? I recollect no event which increased the horror of parliamentary usurpation so much as this. The journals, the pamphlets, and the records of this period ought to be collected and examined with patient attention. About this period, parties in England were as angry as in America. Wilkes and Junius agitated king, ministry, parliament, and nation. Opposition pretended friendship for America; but no members of either house, of administration or opposition, ever dared to avow the true American principle, or to express a doubt of the supreme, unlimited authority of parliament over all the dominions of the crown. "Standing armies in time of peace, stationed in populous cities to preserve internal peace," Cato's Letters and the Independent Whig, and all the writings of Trenchard and Gordon, Mrs. Macaulay's History, Burgh's Political Disquisitions, Clarendon's History of the Civil War, and all the writings relative to the revolutions in England became fashionable reading. Hutchinson, whose ambition made him as weak as water, had declared publicly in council, that he had no authority over the king's troops; that the military force had a separate command, and he could do nothing without Dalrymple. "Good

God!" said the public, "is this our situation already? Is a military authority already erected over the civil authority, or independent of it? Is a lieutenant-colonel of a regiment commander-in-chief of the province, or even independent upon him? We remember the time when Brigadier Timothy Ruggles, commander-in-chief of Massachusetts troops, was put under the command of a British ensign for a whole campaign. Is the whole civil authority of the province now to be placed under the command of a lieutenant-colonel of a British regiment? To talk or think of liberty or privileges under a military government, is as idle and absurd as under an ecclesiastical government.

How slightly soever historians may have passed over this event, the blood of the martyrs, right or wrong, proved to be the seeds of the congregation. Not the battle of Lexington or Bunker's Hill, not the surrender of Burgoyne or Cornwallis were more important events in American history than the battle of King Street, on the 5th of March, 1770. The town of Boston instituted an annual oration in commemoration of this catastrophe, "upon the danger of standing armies, stationed in populous cities in time of peace," and among the first orators were such names as Hancock, Warren, and Lovell. These orations were read, I had almost said by every-body that could read, and scarcely ever with dry eyes. They have now been continued for forty-five years. Will you read them all? They were not long continued in their original design, but other gentlemen with other views had influence enough to obtain a change from "standing armies," to "feelings which produced the revolution." Of these forty-five orations I have read as many as I have seen. They have varied with all the changes of our politics. They have been made the engine of bringing forward to public notice young gentlemen of promising genius, whose connections and sentiments were conformable to the prevailing opinions of the moment. There is juvenile ingenuity in all that I have read. There are few men of consequence among us who did not commence their career by an oration on the 5th of March. I have read these orations with a mixture of grief, pleasure, and pity. Young gentlemen of genius describing scenes they never saw, and descanting on feelings they never felt, and which great pains had been taken that they

never should feel. When will these orations end? And when will they cease to be monuments of the fluctuations of public opinion and general feeling in Boston, Massachusetts, New England, and the United States? They are infinitely more indicative of the feelings of the moment, than of the feelings that produced the revolution.

Remember, Sir, that I am not writing history nor annals. I am only stating a few facts, and suggesting a few hints. If I could be fifty years younger, and had nothing better to do, I would have these orations collected, and printed in volumes, and then write the history of the last forty-five years in commentaries upon them.

TO DR. J. MORSE.

Quincy, 20 January, 1816.

In the order of time, I have passed over a tragical event which excited much interest, and contributed largely to render the sovereignty of parliament odious, detestable, and horrible to the people, and I can conscientiously add, accelerated the catastrophe of the 5th March, 1770.[1]

In 1769, a little before the recall of Governor Bernard, the British frigate, The Rose, sent a lieutenant, a midshipman, and a pressgang of sailors on board a ship of Mr. Hooper, of Marblehead, then returning from Bilboa, upon the recruiting service. The lieutenant demanded of the captain a sight of his crew. The crew were called. "Are here all?" No answer. "Search the ship," said the imperious lieutenant. Away flew the midshipman and his gang of loyal soldiers, through every part of the ship to search for hidden seamen. At last the cry was heard, "here they are." Four sailors had hid themselves in the forepeak of the ship, the place most likely to be overlooked in a search. The forepeak was immediately invaded by the lieutenant, the midshipman, and the whole pressgang armed with

[1] The account which follows is in some measure a repetition of what has been already printed in the second volume, pp. 224 – 226, note, and also in the ninth volume, pp. 317 – 319. But as it forms one of the series addressed to Dr. Morse, and opens some views of the subject not there touched upon, it has been thought best to retain it.

swords and pistols. Michael Corbet and Lieutenant Panton argued the cause, but neither being convinced, resort was had to the *ratio ultima*, and an amiable youth was laid dead at the feet of Michael Corbet. A boat was sent to the Rose, and a strong reënforcement to the pressgang soon broke down all before them, seized the four sailors, one of whom was bleeding with an arm broken by a pistol ball, shot by the midshipman at random among the four, in the first assault upon the forepeak.

A special Court of Admiralty was summoned, according to act of parliament, to try these four sailors for piracy and murder on the high seas, in killing Lieutenant Panton; when in law, truth, and conscience, the commander of the Rose frigate ought to have been prosecuted for piracy and murder on the high seas, in illegally sending a pressgang to enslave freemen, and compelling them in self-defence to destroy their invader and intended destroyer; or in the better language of the boatswain of the Rose frigate, "to deprive honest men of their liberty."

The constitution of this Court ought to be stated by a historian. It consisted of the Governors of Massachusetts, Bernard, and New Hampshire, Wentworth; Judge of Admiralty, Auchmuty; Commander of the Navy, Commodore Hood; and counsellors from several colonies, to the number of fifteen. Whether Hutchinson sat as Lieutenant-Governor or as Chief Justice, I know not. When the Court opened, the counsel of the poor prisoners presented pleas to the jurisdiction of the Court, and if that should be overruled, requesting and demanding that a jury should be summoned to try the facts, according to the course of the common law.

What has become of the records of this Court, whether they have been sent to Halifax or to London, whether they remain in any repository in Boston, or whether they have been burned, like most of the records of this world, I know not. But if they exist, they will show four pleas, drawn at great length, stating the laws, principles, and reasonings on which they were founded, and each of them signed by one of the four prisoners, or by his counsel. These pleadings, contemptible as they may appear at this day, cost the counsel many days of painful research, and the mere composition and draught of them cost more than one sleepless night, in the handwriting.

When the prisoners were arraigned, they presented these four pleas to the Court, and their counsel appeared to support them, with his arguments and books of authority, against Mr. Sewall himself and the other counsel for the crown.

But the counsel on neither side were permitted to say a word. Hutchinson started up, and with a countenance, which remains deeply graven on my retina to this hour, expressive of the designs and passions, the fears and apprehensions, that agitated and tormented his soul, moved that the Court should adjourn to the council chamber. No opposition! no reasons *pro* or *con!* The countenances of the innocents and the simple on the bench, indicating some surprise, but the knowing ones manifesting a knowledge, or, at least, a pleasing conjecture of the secret. The prisoners were remanded; parties, witnesses, counsel, audience, dismissed; and the Court adjourned to the council chamber, where they remained in secret conclave till late in the evening. When they arose, it was given out and propagated through the town that they had decided in favor of the pleas, and that jurors were to be summoned the next morning, to try the prisoners.

Whether this rumor had any foundation in truth, or whether it was invented and circulated to soften the keen asperity of the public feeling, I know not; but this is certain, the Court met again early next morning in secret conclave in the council chamber; and then it was believed by many, conjectured by more, and reported generally, that Hutchinson and his confidential few had been alarmed at the decision of the preceding evening, and had contrived a secret meeting in the morning to reconsider the vote. Whether there was any truth in these whispers, rumors, and murmurs, I know not. But one thing is certain, that when the Court opened in form, the four pleas, without permitting one word to be said for them or against them by the counsel on either side, were pronounced by the president, Bernard, to be overruled.

The prisoners were now at the bar, and the trial commenced. The witnesses on both sides examined and cross-examined.[1]

[1] The notes taken by Mr. Adams in this trial have been found since the publication of the prior volumes. They are very full, and entirely confirm the accuracy of this account given from memory nearly half a century afterwards. Hutchinson says, however, that it was he who pronounced the decision of the Court.

All agreed in every fact and circumstance. No contradictory testimony; British sailors and American sailors all agreed. What morality and what religion, Dr. Morse, in these sons of Neptune! Oh! for the honor of human nature, that I could say the same of the Court!

When the examination was ended and taken down by the clerk and the counsel in writing, the argument of counsel was expected. The counsel for the prisoners had taken great pains to search and research, through every law, human and divine, the doctrine of homicide in all its divisions, distinctions, and limitations. As this was said to be a civil law court, he had ransacked every writer on the civil law, that the town of Boston possessed. He had examined every authority in the laws of England upon the subject, and, superadded to all, he had brought forward that volume of the British Statutes at Large, which contained the *act of parliament which expressly prohibited the impressment of seamen in America.* All these books were piled up on the table before him, in the sight of the Court, when the counsel arose, in the ordinary course of proceedings, to argue the cause of his clients, the poor prisoners at the bar. After addressing the court in the usual style of respect, he begged their attention to the authorities in law, and to the testimonies, which he should apply, to show that the action of the prisoners in killing Lieutenant Panton could amount to nothing more than *justifiable homicide in necessary self-defence.*

The words "justifiable homicide" were scarcely out of his mouth, before Hutchinson started up in very indecorous haste, and moved that the prisoners be remanded, and the Court adjourned to the council chamber. The prisoners, the crowded audience, the bar, the counsel, were all thunderstruck. But what were prisoners, audience, bar or counsel, against "*sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*"? The Court was adjourned to the council chamber, and there inclosed, like a conclave of cardinals, in secret intrigues for the rest of the day.

When the Court opened the next day, and the prisoners ordered to the bar, all the world expected that the trial would commence, and the argument on the law and the evidence proceed. But after a solemn pause and total silence, Governor Bernard, the President of the Court, arose, and with a countenance so solemn and gloomy as made the audience shudder, as

if a sentence of death was coming, addressed himself to the prisoners by name, and pronounced, "The Court have considered the evidence in support of the libel against you, and are unanimously of opinion that it amounts only to *justifiable homicide;* you are accordingly acquitted and discharged from your imprisonment." Not another word was said, except by Mr. Auchmuty, the Judge of Admiralty, who cried out, "The Court is unanimous in this opinion."

I will leave to poets and writers of romance to describe the joy that glowed in every heart, and lighted every countenance at this *denouement* of the tragedy. One circumstance is too characteristic to be omitted. The counsel for the prisoners descending from the chamber where the Court sat, to the lower floor of the Court House, was met at the bottom of the stairs by the boatswain of the Rose. "Sir," said he, "we are all greatly obliged to you for your noble conduct in defence of these brave fellows; yet, Sir, this is the employment in which I have been almost constantly engaged for twenty years, fighting with honest men to deprive them of their liberty. I always thought I ought to be hanged for it, and now I know it."

This trial, Dr. Morse, is a mystery never yet explained, — a labyrinth without a clue! an enigma that never can be unriddled. Though all hypothesis must be unavailing in investigating this phenomenon, so strange, so unprecedented in the history of jurisprudence, I must be permitted to suggest a few hints for your consideration and inquiry.

First. Where can you find a secret court of judicature? In courts martial, in the Inquisition, or in the Lion's mouth at Venice? The star chamber and the high commission court in England, even Jeffreys's courts were open and public.

Second. Here were the Governor, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Chief Justice, the Judge of Admiralty of Massachusetts, the Governor and counsellors from New Hampshire, counsellors from Rhode Island, and the commander-in-chief of the royal navy, Commodore Hood, now, if alive, Lord Bridport, skulking and hiding in total silence from open court to secret council chamber, like Indians fighting behind bushes, and running in the dark from one bush to another to avoid detection.

Third. Upon what law, upon what principle were the prisoners acquitted of piracy and murder? Nobody knew, nobody

could conjecture. Every honest soul was delighted with the decision, but none knew or could surmise upon what grounds it was made.

Fourth. Was the decision according to the law of nature, the law of nations, the civil law, the common law, or the statute law? No man could answer any of these questions. All was darkness, mystery, uncertainty, and confusion. The honest lawyers said, "*misera servitus est, ubi jus est vagum aut incognitum.*"

Fifth. There was an act of parliament expressly forbidding impressments in America, then lying on the table before the judges, produced by the counsel for the prisoners, and ready to be read at a moment's warning, which would have justified the decision of the Court, to the king, the English nation, and the American public, without any other authority or argument. Why did not the Court permit this statute to be read or mentioned? Why did they not produce it and read it themselves, if the counsel had through ignorance or forgetfulness omitted it.

Sixth. Can it be credible, that this Court, and all the counsel for the crown, and all the naval and custom-house officers were ignorant of this statute? However incredible it may appear, I have always believed and still believe that not one of them all had the least knowledge or suspicion that such an act existed. There was at that time but one copy of the Statutes at Large in the Massachusetts, and that set had been imported by the counsel for the prisoners.

Seventh. Was the sentence of the Court founded on the principle of the universal illegality of impressment? I sincerely believe it was, and, moreover, that not one judge upon that bench would have dared to give an opinion of its legality. The oracular and equivocal dictum of Lord Chatham had not then been pronounced, nor the opinion of the first Pitt, as ignorant as it was dogmatical, that it was a common-law prerogative of the crown. Candor obliges me to acknowledge that Mr. Sewall conducted this prosecution like a judicious lawyer and a polite gentleman; but Hutchinson appeared hurried between his terror of the crown and its officers on one hand, and his dread of unpopularity on the other.[1] No trial had ever interested the

[1] Hutchinson has explained this whole matter. He admits that the change in the action of the Court upon the application for a jury was owing entirely to

community so much before, excited so much curiosity and compassion, or so many apprehensions of the fatal consequences of the supremacy of parliamentary jurisdiction, or the intrigues of parliamentary courts. No trial had drawn together such crowds of auditors from day to day; they were as numerous as those in the next year, at the trials of Preston and the soldiers.

Nevertheless, every thing relative to this great event must remain mysterious. The whole transaction seems totally forgotten. None of our historians appears to have ever heard of it. Mrs. Warren has not remembered it, and Dr. Gordon has taken no notice of it; yet Dr. Gordon has minutely related the action of Mr. Richardson in shooting young Snider, and its effects. Mr. Richardson and his exploit were thought worthy to be recorded, while Panton and Corbet were to be forgotten! And who was Richardson? If there was even a color of justice in the public opinion, he was the most abandoned wretch in America. Adultery, incest, perjury were reputed to be his ordinary crimes. His life would exhibit an atrocious volume. This man was selected by the board of commissioners for a custom-house officer. His name was sufficient to raise a mob, and I had almost said to the honor of the mob. Mr. Richardson and the innocent victim, Snider, ought to have been remembered, but Panton and Corbet ought not to have been forgotten. Preston and his soldiers ought to have been forgotten sooner.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 2 March, 1816.

I cannot be serious! I am about to write you the most frivolous letter you ever read. Would you go back to your cradle, and live over again your seventy years? I believe you would return me a New England answer, by asking me another question, "Would you live your eighty years over again?" If I

his interference; and he rests the final decision upon the fact, that neither the lieutenant nor his superior officer was acting by any warrant or special authority from the lords of the admiralty. This avoided the question of their power to give such authority. *History of Massachusetts*, vol. iii. p. 232, note.

am prepared to give you an explicit answer, the question involves so many considerations of metaphysics and physics, of theology and ethics, of philosophy and history, of experience and romance, of tragedy, comedy, and farce, that I would not give my opinion without writing a volume to justify it. I have lately lived over again in part, from 1753, when I was junior sophister at college, till 1769, when I was digging in the mines as a barrister at law for silver and gold in the town of Boston, and got as much of the shining dross for my labor, as my utmost avarice at that time craved. At the hazard of the little vision that is left me, I have read the history of that period of sixteen years, in the six first volumes of the Baron de Grimm. In a late letter to you, I expressed a wish to see a history of quarrels, and calamities of authors in France, like that of D'Israeli in England; I did not expect it so soon, but now I have it in a manner more masterly than I ever hoped to see it. It is not only a narrative of the incessant great wars between the ecclesiastics and the philosophers, but of the little skirmishes and squabbles of poets, musicians, sculptors, painters, architects, tragedians, comedians, opera singers, and dancers, chansons, vaudevilles, epigrams, madrigals, epitaphs, sonnets, &c.

No man is more sensible than I am of the service to science and letters, humanity, fraternity, and liberty, that would have been rendered by the encyclopedists and economists, by Voltaire, D'Alembert, Buffon, Diderot, Rousseau, La Lande, Frederic and Catherine, if they had possessed common sense. But they were all totally destitute of it. They seemed to think that all Christendom was convinced, as they were, that all religion was "*visions judaiques*," and that their effulgent lights had illuminated all the world; they seemed to believe that whole nations and continents had been changed in their principles, opinions, habits, and feelings, by the sovereign grace of their almighty philosophy, almost as suddenly as Catholics and Calvinists believe in instantaneous conversion. They had not considered the force of early education on the minds of millions, who had never heard of their philosophy.

And what was their philosophy? Atheism, — pure, unadulterated atheism. Diderot, D'Alembert, Frederic, De La Lande, and Grimm, were indubitable atheists. The universe was master only, and eternal. Spirit was a word without a meaning.

Liberty was a word without a meaning. There was no liberty in the universe; liberty was a word void of sense. Every thought, word, passion, sentiment, feeling, all motion and action was necessary. All beings and attributes were of eternal necessity; conscience, morality, were all nothing but fate. This was their creed, and this was to perfect human nature, and convert the earth into a paradise of pleasure.

Who and what is this fate? He must be a sensible fellow. He must be a master of science; he must be a master of spherical trigonometry, and great circle sailing; he must calculate eclipses in his head by intuition; he must be master of the science of infinitesimals, "*la science des infiniment petits.*" He must involve and extract all the roots by intuition, and be familiar with all possible or imaginable sections of the cone. He must be a master of the arts, mechanical and imitative; he must have more eloquence than Demosthenes, more wit than Swift or Voltaire, more humor than Butler or Trumbull; and what is more comfortable than all the rest, he must be good-natured; for this is upon the whole a good world. There is ten times as much pleasure as pain in it.

Why, then, should we abhor the word *God*, and fall in love with the word *fate?* We know there exists energy and intellect enough to produce such a world as this, which is a sublime and beautiful one, and a very benevolent one, notwithstanding all our snarling; and a happy one, if it is not made otherwise by our own fault.

Ask a mite in the centre of your mammoth cheese, what he thinks of the "τό πᾶν." I should prefer the philosophy of Timæus of Locris, before that of Grimm, Diderot, Frederic, and D'Alembert. I should even prefer the Shaster of Indostan, or the Chaldean, Egyptian, Indian, Greek, Christian, Mahometan, Teutonic, or Celtic theology. Timæus and Ocellus taught that three principles were eternal: God, matter, and form. God was good, and had ideas; matter was necessity, fate, dead, without form, without feeling, perverse, untractable, capable, however, of being cut into forms of spheres, circles, triangles, squares, cubes, cones, &c. The ideas of the good God labored upon matter to bring it into form; but matter was fate, necessity, dulness, obstinacy, and would not always conform to the ideas of the good God, who desired to make the best of all possible

worlds, but matter, fate, necessity, resisted, and would not let him complete his idea. Hence all the evil and disorder, pain, misery, and imperfection of the universe.

We all curse Robespierre and Bonaparte; but were they not both such restless, vain, extravagant animals as Diderot and Voltaire? Voltaire was the greatest literary character and Bona the greatest military character of the eighteenth century; there is all the difference between them; both equally heroes and equally cowards.

When you asked my opinion of a university, it would have been easy to advise mathematics, experimental philosophy, natural history, chemistry, and astronomy, geography, and the fine arts, to the exclusion of ontology, metaphysics, and theology. But knowing the eager impatience of the human mind to search into eternity and infinity, the first cause and last end of all things, I thought best to leave it its liberty to inquire, till it is convinced, as I have been these fifty years, that there is but one being in the universe who comprehends it, and our last resource is resignation.

This Grimm must have been in Paris when you were there. Did you know him or hear of him?

I have this moment received two volumes more; but these are from 1777 to 1782, leaving the chain broken from 1769 to 1777. I hope hereafter to get the two intervening volumes.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 3 May, 1816.

Yours of April 8th has long since been received.

J. Would you agree to live your eighty years over again?

A. Aye, and *sans phrase*.

J. Would you agree to live your eighty years over again for ever?

A. I once heard our acquaintance, Chew, of Philadelphia, say, he should like to go back to twenty-five, to all eternity. But I own my soul would start and shrink back on itself at the prospect of an endless succession of *boules de savon*, almost as

much as at the certainty of annihilation. For what is human life? I can speak only for one. I have had more comfort than distress, more pleasure than pain, ten to one; nay, if you please, a hundred to one. A pretty large dose, however, of distress and pain. But, after all, what is human life? A vapor, a fog, a dew, a cloud, a blossom, a flower, a rose, a blade of grass, a glass bubble, a tale told by an idiot, a *boule de savon*, vanity of vanities, an eternal succession of which would terrify me almost as much as annihilation.

J. Would you prefer to live over again rather than accept the offer of a better life in a future state?

A. Certainly not.

J. Would you live again, rather than change for the worse in a future state, for the sake of trying something new?

A. Certainly, yes!

J. Would you live over again once or forever rather than run the risk of annihilation, or of a better or worse state at or after death?

A. Most certainly I would not.

J. How valiant you are!

A. Aye, at this moment and at all other moments of my life that I can recollect; but who can tell what will become of his bravery, when his flesh and his philosophy were not sufficient to support him in his last hours. D'Alembert said, Happy are they who have courage, but I have none. Voltaire, the greatest genius of them all, behaved like the greatest coward of them all, at his death, as he had like the wisest fool of them all in his lifetime. Hume awkwardly affects to sport away all sober thoughts. Who can answer for his last feelings and reflections, especially as the priests are in possession of the custom of making the great engines of their craft, *procul este profani.*

J. How shall we, how can we, estimate the value of human life?

A. I know not; I cannot weigh sensations and reflections, pleasures and pains, hopes and fears in money scales. But I can tell you how I have heard it estimated by some philosophers. One of my old friends and clients, a *mandamus* counsellor against his will, a man of letters and virtues, without one vice that I ever knew or suspected, except garrulity, William Vassal,

asserted to me, and strenuously maintained, that pleasure is no compensation for pain. A hundred years of the keenest delights of human life, could not atone for one hour of bilious colic that he had felt. The sublimity of this philosophy my dull genius could not reach. I was willing to state a fair account between pleasure and pain, and give credit for the balance, which I found very great in my favor. Another philosopher who, as we say, believed nothing, ridiculed the notion of a future state. One of the company asked, "Why are you an enemy to a future state? Are you wearied of life? Do you detest existence?" "Weary of life! Detest existence!" said the philosopher, "no, I love life so well and am so attached to existence, that to be sure of immortality, I would consent to be pitched about with forks by the devils among flames of fire and brimstone to all eternity." I find no resources in my courage for this exalted philosophy. I would rather be blotted out. *Il faut trancher le mot.* What is there in life to attach us to it, but the hope of a future and a better? It is a cracker, a bouquet, a firework, at best.

I admire your navigation, and should like to sail with you either in your bark or in my own, alongside with yours. Hope, with her gay ensigns displayed at the prow; fear, with her hobgoblins behind the stern. Hope remains. What pleasure? I mean, take away fear, and what pain remains? Ninety-nine hundredths of the pleasures and pains of life are nothing but hopes and fears. All nations known in history or in travels have hoped, believed, and expected a future and a better state. The Maker of the universe, the cause of all things, whether we call it *fate*, or *chance*, or *God*, has inspired this hope. If it is a fraud, we shall never know it; we shall never resent the imposition, be grateful for the illusion, nor grieve for the disappointment; we shall be no more.

Credant Grimm, Diderot, Buffon, La Lande, Condorcet, D'Holbach, Frederic, Catherine, *non ego.* Arrogant as it may be, I shall take the liberty to pronounce them all *ideologians.* Yet I would not persecute a hair of their heads; the world is wide enough for them and me.

Suppose the cause of the universe should reveal to all mankind at once a certainty, that they must all die within a century, and that death is an eternal extinction of all living powers,

of all sensation and reflection. What would be the effect? Would there be one man, woman, or child existing on this globe twenty years hence? Would every human being be a Madame Deffand, Voltaire's "*aveugle clairvoyante*," all her lifetime regretting her existence, bewailing that she had ever been born; grieving that she had ever been dragged without her consent into being? Who would bear the gout, the stone, the colic, for the sake of a *boule de savon*, when a pistol, a cord, a pond, a phial of laudanum, was at hand? What would men say to their Maker? Would they thank him? No; they would reproach him, they would curse him to his face.

Voilà, a sillier letter than my last! For a wonder, I have filled a sheet, and a greater wonder, I have read fifteen volumes of Grimm. *Digito compesce labellum.* I hope to write you more upon this and other topics of your letter. I have read also a history of the Jesuits, in four volumes. Can you tell me the author, or any thing of this work?

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 6 May, 1816.

Neither eyes, fingers, nor paper held out to despatch all the trifles I wished to write in my last letter.

In your letter of April 8th, you wonder for what good end the sensations of grief could be intended. You wish the pathologists would tell us what is the use of grief in our economy, and of what good it is the cause, proximate or remote. When I approach such questions as this, I consider myself like one of those little eels in vinegar, or one of those animalcules in black or red pepper or in the horseradish root, that bite our tongues so cruelly, reasoning upon the τό πᾶν. Of what use is this sting upon the tongue? Why might we not have the benefit of these stimulants without the sting? Why might we not have the fragrance, the beauty of the rose, without the thorn?

In the first place, however, we know not the connections between pleasure and pain. They seem to be mechanical and inseparable. How can we conceive a strong passion, a sen-

guine hope, suddenly disappointed, without producing pain or grief? Swift, at seventy, recollected the fish he had angled out of water when a boy, which broke loose from his hook, and said, "I feel the disappointment at this moment." A merchant places all his fortune and all his credit in a single India or China ship. She arrives at the Vineyard with a cargo worth a million, in order. Sailing round the Cape for Boston, a sudden storm wrecks her; ship, cargo, and crew all lost. Is it possible that the merchant, ruined, bankrupt, sent to prison by his creditors, his wife and children starving, should not grieve? Suppose a young couple, with every advantage of persons, fortune, and connection, on the point of an indissoluble union. A flash of lightning, or any one of those millions of accidents which are allotted to humanity, proves fatal to one of the lovers. Is it possible that the other, and all the friends of both, should not grieve? It should seem that grief, as a mere passion, must necessarily be in proportion to sensibility.

Did you ever see a portrait or a statue of a great man, without perceiving strong traits of pain and anxiety? These furrows were all ploughed in the countenance by grief. Our juvenile oracle, Sir Edward Coke, thought that none were fit for legislators and magistrates but *sad men;* and who were these sad men? They were aged men who had been tossed and buffeted in the vicissitudes of life, forced upon profound reflection by grief and disappointments, and taught to command their passions and prejudices.

But all this, you will say, is nothing to the purpose; it is only repeating and exemplifying a fact, which my question supposed to be well known, namely, the existence of grief, and is no answer to my question, what are the uses of grief? This is very true, and you are very right; but may not the uses of grief be inferred, or at least suggested by such exemplifications of known facts? Grief compels the India merchant to think, to reflect upon the plan of his voyage. "Have I not been rash to trust my fortune, my family, my liberty to the caprice of winds and waves in a single ship? I will never again give loose to my imagination and avarice. It had been wiser and more honest to have traded on a smaller scale, upon my own capital." The desolated lover, and disappointed connections, are compelled by their grief to reflect on the vanity of

human wishes and expectations; to learn the essential lesson of resignation, to review their own conduct toward the deceased, to correct any errors or faults in their future conduct towards their remaining friends, and towards all men; to recollect the virtues of their lost friend, and resolve to imitate them; his follies and vices, if he had any, and resolve to avoid them. Grief drives men into habits of serious reflection, sharpens the understanding, and softens the heart; it compels them to rouse their reason, to assert its empire over their passions, propensities and prejudices, to elevate them to a superiority over all human events, to give them the *felicis animi immotam tranquilitatem;* in short, to make them stoics and Christians.

After all, as grief is a pain, it stands in the predicament of all other evil, and the great question occurs, what is the origin and what the final cause of evil. This, perhaps, is known only to Omniscience. We poor mortals have nothing to do with it, but to fabricate all the good we can out of all inevitable evils, and to avoid all that are avoidable; and many such there are, among which are our own unnecessary apprehensions and imaginary fears. Though stoical apathy is impossible, yet patience, and resignation, and tranquillity may be acquired, by consideration, in a great degree, very much for the happiness of life.

I have read Grimm in fifteen volumes, of more than five hundred pages each. I will not say, like Uncle Toby, "you shall not die" till you have read him, but you ought to read him, if possible. It is the most entertaining work I ever read. He appears exactly as you represent him. What is most of all remarkable, is his impartiality. He spares no characters, but Necker and Diderot. Voltaire, Buffon, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Rousseau, Marmontel, Condorcet, La Harpe, Beaumarchais, and all others are lashed without ceremony. Their portraits are faithfully drawn as possible. It is a complete review of French literature and fine arts from 1753 to 1790. No politics. Criticisms very just. Anecdotes without number, and very merry; one, ineffably ridiculous, I wish I could send you, but it is immeasurably long. D'Argens, a little out of health and shivering with the cold in Berlin, asked leave of the King to take a ride to Gascony, his native province. He was absent so long that Frederic concluded the air of the south of France was likely to detain his friend, and as he wanted his society and services,

he contrived a trick to bring him back. He fabricated a *mandement* in the name of the Archbishop of Aix, commanding all the faithful to seize the Marquis d'Argens, author of Ocellus, Timæus, and Julian, works atheistical, deistical, heretical, and impious in the highest degree. This *mandement*, composed in a style of ecclesiastical eloquence, that never was exceeded by Pope, Jesuit, Inquisitor, or Sorbonnite, he sent in print by a courier to d'Argens, who, frightened out of his wits, fled by cross-roads out of France and back to Berlin, to the greater joy of the philosophical court for the laugh of Europe, which they had raised at the expense of the learned Marquis.

I do not like the late resurrection of the Jesuits. They have a general now in Russia, in correspondence with the Jesuits in the United States, who are more numerous than everybody knows. Shall we not have swarms of them here, in as many shapes and disguises as ever a king of the gypsies, Bampfylde Moore Carew himself, assumed? In the shape of printers, editors, writers, schoolmasters, &c.? I have lately read Pascal's letters over again, and four volumes of the History of the Jesuits. If ever any congregation of men could merit eternal perdition on earth and in hell, according to these historians, though, like Pascal, true Catholics, it is this company of Loyola. Our system, however, of religious liberty must afford them an asylum; but if they do not put the purity of our elections to a severe trial, it will be a wonder.

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.

Quincy, 26 May, 1816.

Reverend, Honorable, Learned, Venerable, and Dear Sir, — As I stand in need of a casuist in philosophy, morality, and Christianity, to whom should I apply but to you, whom I consider as the best qualified of all my friends?

The stoics, the Christians, the Mahometans, and our North American Indians all agree that complaint is unmanly, unlawful, and impious. To bear torment without a murmur, a sigh, a groan, or a distortion of face and feature, or a writhe or contortion of the body, is consummate virtue, heroism, and piety.

Mr. Lear has completed the glory of great and good Washington, by informing us that he suffered great distress without a sigh or a groan. Jephtha's daughter, Agamemnon's Iphigenia, the Hindoo widows, who roast and broil and fry with their husband's bones, probably utter no shrieks. The son of Alnomac never complained. Brissot and some of his colleagues are said to have pronounced "*Vive la répub*—," when the guillotine has cut off the head, which hopping and bouncing and rolling has articulated the syllable "*lique*," after it was sundered from the shoulders.

I can almost believe all this. The history of the Christian martyrs, and the French clergy on the 2d of September, seem to render it credible. Indeed, in the course of my strange life I have had at times some feelings of a like kind; but I do not give so much weight to all these as to the cool declaration of our excellent and blessed, though once passionate, Dr. Chauncy, that he had found by experience that a man could lie all night upon his pillow under the most excruciating torment of toothache, headache, rheumatism, or gout, unable to sleep a wink, without uttering a groan, sigh, or syllable. Now, Sir, please to tell me what virtue there is in all this? A common man, as I am informed, was lately asked what he meant by the word *resignation*. His answer was, "*I cannot help it.*" Could Socrates have given a better reason?

Resignation is our own affair. What good does it do to God? Prudence dictates to us to make the best we can of inevitable evils. We may fret and fume and peeve, and scold and rave, but what good does this do? It hurts ourselves, and may hurt our neighbors by the weak, silly, foolish example, but does no good in the universe that we can imagine.

Voltaire, for the last ten years of his life seemed to adopt as a kind of motto, "*vieux et malade*," and I might adopt for mine, "*vieux et malade, paralytique et presque aveugle.*" My wife has been sick all winter, frequently at the point of death, in her own opinion. I have been sick in the beginning of winter and the beginning of spring, and good for nothing all the year round. I have lost the ablest friend I had on earth in Mr. Dexter. Is all this complaint? If I say I have the toothache, the headache, the earache, the colic, the gout, the gravel, the stone, or the rheumatism, is this complaint? As I have alluded

to Washington, I may quote Franklin. The aged philosopher alighted from his coach at my door, at Auteuil, on an invitation to dinner. I never saw a more perfect picture of horror, terror, or grief than his countenance. I was shocked with surprise and compassion. He turned to his coachman and said, "You need not come for me. I will walk home" (to Passy, about two miles). He then turned to me and said, "I will never enter the door of a coach again, at least if I cannot find a coachman who has the stone." I believe he kept his word; but was this complaint?

I see nothing but pride, vanity, affectation, and hypocrisy in these pretended stoical apathies. I have so much sympathy and compassion for human nature, that a man or a woman may grunt and groan, screech and scream, weep, cry, or roar, as much as nature dictates under extreme distress, provided there be no affectation; for there may be hypocrisy even in these expressions of torture. I have not alluded to the crucifixions of the *convulsionnaires* of Paris. Pray enlighten my conscience.

Now for the travels on and about the Oneida lake, which I read with more interest than Scott's monument of clannish fable, "The Lady of the Lake." Receiving it without any letter, I concluded it was to be returned to you. Wishing Mr. Johnson might have the pleasure and advantage of reading it, I requested him to return it to you. I no more suspected it to come from Dewitt Clinton than from the prophet of Wabash or the prophet of Oneida, or the up and down philosopher and hero of Elba and St. Helena. Had Mr. Clinton condescended to drop me a line, I should have delivered the manuscript to Mr. Quincy, as you intended.

I lament the misfortunes of friend Gyselaer's family, as I do those of my friend Gerry's, and many others of the most virtuous and meritorious men I have known. I cannot say I have never seen the seed of honest men begging bread; but I believe equity as well as goodness will prevail in the universe throughout. This is a fundamental article in the faith of your friend.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Monticello, 1 August, 1816.

Your two philosophical letters, of May 4th and 6th, have been too long in my *carton* of "letters to be answered." To the question, indeed, to the utility of grief, no answer remains to be given. You have exhausted the subject. I see that with the other evils of life it is destined to temper the cup we are to drink.

> Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
> The source of evil one, and one of good;
> From thence the cup of mortal man he fills:
> Blessing to these, to those distributes ills;
> To most he mingles both.

Putting to myself your question, Would I agree to live my seventy-three years over again forever, I hesitate to say. With Chew's limitations, from twenty-five to sixty, I would say yes; and I might go further back, but not come lower down. For at the latter period, with most of us, the powers of life are sensibly on the wane; sight becomes dim, hearing dull, memory constantly enlarging its frightful blank, and parting with all we have ever seen or known, spirits evaporate, bodily debility creeps on, palsying every limb, and so faculty after faculty quits us, and where, then, is life? If, in its full vigor, of good as well as evil, your friend Vassall could doubt its value, it must be purely a negative quantity, when its evils alone remain. Yet I do not go into his opinion entirely. I do not agree that an age of pleasure is no compensation for a moment of pain. I think, with you, that life is a fair matter of account, and the balance often, nay generally, in its favor. It is not, indeed, easy, by calculation of intensity and time, to apply a common measure, or to fix the par between pleasure and pain; yet it exists, and is measurable. On the question, for example, whether to be cut for the stone, the young, with a longer prospect of years, think these overbalance the pain of the operation. Dr. Franklin, at the age of eighty, thought his residuum of life not worth that price. I should have thought with him, even taking the stone out of the scale. There is a ripeness of time for death, regarding others as well as ourselves, when it is

reasonable we should drop off, and make room for another growth. When we have lived our generation out, we should not wish to encroach on another. I enjoy good health. I am happy in what is around me; yet I assure you, I am ripe for leaving all, this year, this day, this hour. If it could be doubted, whether we would go back to twenty-five, how can it be, whether we would go forward from seventy-three? Bodily decay is gloomy in prospect; but of all human contemplations, the most abhorrent is body without mind. Perhaps, however, I might accept of time to read Grimm before I go. Fifteen volumes of anecdotes and incidents, within the compass of my own time and cognizance, written by a man of genius, of taste, of point, an acquaintance, the measure and traverses of whose mind I knew, could not fail to turn the scale in favor of life during their perusal. I must write to Ticknor, to add it to my catalogue, and hold on till it comes.

There is a Mr. Vanderkemp, of New York, a correspondent, I believe, of yours, with whom I have exchanged some letters, without knowing who he is. Will you tell me?

I know nothing of the History of the Jesuits you mention, in four volumes. Is it a good one? I dislike, with you, their restoration, because it marks a retrograde step from light towards darkness. We shall have our follies without doubt. Some one or more of them will always be afloat, but ours will be the follies of enthusiasm, not of bigotry, not of Jesuitism. Bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm, of the free and buoyant. Education and free discussion are the antidotes of both. We are destined to be a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism. Old Europe will have to lean on our shoulders, and to hobble along by our side, under the monkish trammels of priests and kings, as she can. What a colossus shall we be, when the southern continent comes up to our mark! What a stand will it secure as a ralliance for the reason and freedom of the globe! I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past. So good night. I will dream on, always fancying that Mrs. Adams and yourself are by my side marking the progress and the obliquities of ages and countries.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 9 August, 1816.

The biography of Mr. Vanderkemp would require a volume, which I could not write if a million were offered me as a reward for this work. After a learned and scientific education, he entered the army in Holland, and served as a captain with reputation; but loving books more than arms, he resigned his commission, and became a preacher. My acquaintance with him commenced at Leyden, in 1780. He was then minister of the Mennonist congregation, the richest in Europe, in that city, where he was celebrated as the most elegant writer in the Dutch language. He was the intimate friend of Luzac and De Gyselaer. In 1788, when the king of Prussia threatened Holland with invasion, his party insisted on his taking a command in the army of defence, and he was appointed to the command of the most exposed and most important post in the seven provinces. He was soon surrounded by the Prussian forces; but he defended his fortress with a prudence, fortitude, patience, and perseverance, which were admired by all Europe, till, abandoned by his nation, destitute of provisions and ammunition, still refusing to surrender, he was offered the most honorable capitulation. He accepted it, was offered very advantageous proposals, but despairing of the liberty of his country, he returned to Antwerp; determined to emigrate to New York, he wrote to me in London, requesting letters of introduction. I sent him letters to Governor Clinton and several others of our little great men. His history in this country is equally curious and affecting. He left property in Holland, which the revolutions there have annihilated, and I fear is now pinched with poverty. His head is deeply learned, and his heart is pure. I scarcely know a more amiable character. A gentleman here asked my opinion of him. My answer was, "he is a *mountain of salt* to the earth." He has written to me occasionally, and I have answered his letters in great haste. You may well suppose that such a man has not always been able to understand our American politics. Nor have I. Had he been as great a master of our language as he was of his own, he would at this day have been one of the most conspicuous characters in the United States.

So much for Vanderkemp. Now for your letter of August 1st. Your poet, the Ionian, I suppose, ought to have told us, whether Jove, in the distribution of good and evil from his two urns, observes any rule of equity or not; whether he thunders out flames of eternal fire on the many, and power, glory, and felicity on the few, without any consideration of justice. Let us state a few questions "*sub rosâ*."

1. Would you accept a life, if offered you, of equal pleasure and pain, *e. g.* one million of moments of pleasure and one million of moments of pain? 1,000,000 pleasure = 1,000,000 pain. Suppose the pleasure as exquisite as any in life, and the pain as exquisite as any, *e. g.* stone, gravel, gout, headache, earache, toothache, colic, &c. I would not. I would rather be blotted out.

2. Would you accept a life of one year of incessant gout, headache, &c., for seventy-two years of such life as you have enjoyed? I would not. 1 year of cholic = 72 of *boule de savon*. Pretty, but unsubstantial. I would rather be extinguished. You may vary these algebraical equations at pleasure and without end. All this ratiocination, calculation, call it what you will, is founded on the supposition of no future state. Promise me eternal life, free from pain, though in all other respects no better than our present terrestrial existence, I know not how many thousand years of Smithfield fires I would not endure to obtain it. In fine, without the supposition of a future state, mankind and this globe appear to me the most sublime and beautiful bubble and bauble that imagination can conceive. Let us, then, wish for immortality at all hazards, and trust the ruler with his skies. I do, and earnestly wish for his commands, which, to the utmost of my power, shall be implicitly and piously obeyed.

It is worth while to live to read Grimm, whom I have read. And La Harpe, and Mademoiselle d'Espinasse, the fair friend of d'Alembert, both of whom Grimm characterizes very distinctly, are, I am told, in print. I have not seen them, but hope soon to have them.

My History of the Jesuits is not elegantly written, but is supported by unquestionable authorities, is very particular and very horrible. Their restoration is indeed "a step towards darkness," cruelty, perfidy, despotism, death and —! I wish we

were out of danger of bigotry and Jesuitism. May we be "a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism." What a colossus shall we be! But will it not be of brass, iron, and clay? Your taste is judicious in liking better the dreams of the future than the history of the past. Upon this principle I prophesy that you and I shall soon meet better friends than ever. So wishes

J. A.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 9 September, 1816.

I thank you for your kind letter of the 5th of this month, which our meritorious friend, Mr. Shaw, put into my hand yesterday. I had before seen the paragraph in the Daily Advertiser. The Baron de Grimm himself, in a subsequent volume, sufficiently explains and confutes the error of the rumor which had been propagated, I know not by whom, in 1782.[1] You will find at the end of the first volume of the "Defence of our Constitutions," a postscript and a letter, in French, which will explain, somewhat too cavalierly and vulgarly, the whole matter. If you think it of any importance, however, as soon as the weakness of my eyes and the trembling of my hands will permit, I will give you a more decent statement of the facts, and the letter to the Abbé, in our language. I never saw the Baron till 1785, when I left Paris, never to see it more. He was then only a secret correspondent of the empress of Russia, and some of the sovereigns of Germany. He was soon appointed a public minister, admitted into the diplomatic corps, and consequently became known to Mr. Jefferson. The Baron's great work in fifteen volumes will be read with different views. The lovers of romance, founded on truth, will find it an exquisite entertainment. I need not tell you how the amateurs and connoisseurs of the fine arts, of architecture, painting, sculpture, statuary, music, poetry, eloquence, &c., and every species of theatrical instruction and

[1] That the Abbé de Mably had been applied to by the United States, for his aid to form a code of laws. Baron de Grimm corrected the error in 1784. See Vol. v. Appendix, p. 491.

amusement will be delighted with it. I own to you, I admire it as the best history of the causes, the rise, and progress of the French revolution, to 1790, that I have seen.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 30 September, 1816.

The seconds of life that remain to me are so few and so short (and they seem to me shorter and shorter every minute) that I cannot stand upon epistolary etiquette; and though I have written two letters yet unnoticed, I must write a third, because I am not acquainted with any man on this side Monticello who can give me any information upon subjects that I am now *analyzing* and *investigating*, if I may now be permitted to use the pompous words now in fashion.

When I read Dr. Priestley's remarks upon "Dupuis," I felt a curiosity to know more about him. I wrote to Europe, and engaged another to write. I had no idea of more than one or two volumes in octavo or duodecimo; but lo! I am overwhelmed with eight or ten volumes, and another of *planches!*

Sixteen years of research the author acknowledges; and as he quotes his authorities, I would not undertake to verify them in sixteen years, if I had all his books, which surely are not to be found in America. If you know any thing of this Monsieur Dupuis, or his *Origine de tous les Cultes*, *candidus imperti.*

I have read only the first volume. It is learned and curious. The whole work will afford me business, study, and amusement for the winter.

Dr. Priestley pronounced him an atheist, and his wŏrk the "*ne plus ultra* of infidelity." Priestley agrees with him, that the history of the fall of Adam and Eve is an "allegory," a fable, an Arabian tale, and so does Dr. Middleton, to account for the origin of evil, which, however, it does not. Priestley says that the Apocalypse, according to Dupuis, is the most learned work that ever was written.

With these brief *flétrissures*, Priestley seems to have expected

to annihilate the influence of Dupuis's labor, as Swift destroyed Blackmore with his

> "Undid Creation at a jerk,
> And of redemption made damned work."

And as he disgraced men as good, at least, as himself by his

> "Wicked Will Whiston"

And

> "Good Master Ditton."

But Dupuis is not to be so easily destroyed. The controversy between spiritualism and materialism, between spiritualists and materialists, will not be settled by scurrilous epigrams of Swift, nor by dogmatical censures of Priestley. You and I have as much authority to settle these disputes as Swift, Priestley, Dupuis, or the Pope; and if you will agree with me, we will issue our bull, and enjoin it upon all these gentlemen to be silent till they can tell us what matter is, and what spirit is, and in the mean time to observe the commandments, and the sermon on the mount.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 4 November, 1816.

Your letter of October 14th has greatly obliged me. Tracy's Analysis I have read once, and wish to read it a second time. It shall be returned to you; but I wish to be informed whether this gentleman is one of that family of Tracys with which the Marquis Lafayette is connected by intermarriages.

I have read not only the Analysis, but eight volumes out of twelve of the "*Origine de tous les Cultes*," and, if life lasts, will read the other four. But, my dear Sir, I have been often obliged to stop and talk to myself, like the reverend, allegorical, hieroglyphical, and apocalyptical Mr. John Bunyan, and say, "*sobrius esto*, John, be not carried away by sudden blasts of wind, by unexpected flashes of lightning, nor terrified by the sharpest crashes of thunder."

We have now, it seems, a national Bible Society, to propa-

gate King James's Bible through all nations. Would it not be better to apply these pious subscriptions to purify Christendom from the corruptions of Christianity than to propagate those corruptions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America? Suppose we should project a society to translate Dupuis into all languages, and offer a reward in medals of diamonds to any man or body of men who would produce the best answer to it.

Enthusiasms, crusades, French revolutions, are epidemical or endemical distempers, to which mankind is liable. They are not tertian or quartan agues. Ages and centuries are sometimes required to cure them.

It is more worth your while to read Dupuis than Grimm. Of all the romances and true histories I ever read, it is the most entertaining and instructive, though Priestley calls it "*dull*."

Conclude not from all this that I have renounced the Christian religion, or that I agree with Dupuis in all his sentiments. Far from it. I see in every page something to recommend Christianity in its purity, and something to discredit its corruptions. If I had strength, I would give you my opinion of it in a fable of the bees. The ten commandments and the sermon on the mount contain my religion.

I agree perfectly with you that "the moral sense is as much a part of our condition as that of feeling," and in all that you say upon this subject.

My History of the Jesuits is in four volumes in twelves, under the title of "*Histoire Générale de la Naissance et des Progrès de la Compagnie de Jésus, et l'Analyse de ses Constitutions et ses Priviléges*," printed at Amsterdam in 1761. The work is anonymous, because, as I suppose, the author was afraid, as all the monarchs of Europe were, at that time, of Jesuitical assassination. The author, however, supports his facts by authentic records and known authorities which the public may consult.

This society has been a greater calamity to mankind than the French Revolution, or Napoleon's despotism or ideology. It has obstructed the progress of reformation and the improvement of the human mind in society much longer and more fatally.

The situation of England may be learned from the inclosed letter, which I pray you to return to me. Little reason as I have to love the old lady, I cannot but dread that she is going

after France into a revolution, which will end like that of England in 1660, and like that of France in 1816. In all events our country must rise. England cannot.

We have long been afflicted with a report, that your books, and Harvard College books, and John Quincy Adams's *Uranologia* were lost at sea. But lo! the Astronomy has arrived in one ship and College books in another. We hope your books are equally safe, but should be glad to know. It seems that father and son have been employed in contemplating the heavens! I should like to sit down with him and compare Dupuis with his *Uranologia*.

I have been disappointed in the review of Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia. Those cunning Edinburgh men break off at the point of the only subject that excited my curiosity, the ancient and modern religion and government of Persia. I should admire to read an Edinburgh or Quarterly review of Dupuis's twelve volumes. They have reviewed Grimm, who is not of half the importance to mankind. I suspect the reviewers evaded the religion of Persia for fear they should be compelled to compare it with Dupuis.

A scrap of an English paper, in which you are honorably mentioned, and I am not much abused, must close this letter from your friend.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 16 November, 1816.

Your favor of the 11th has conjured up in my imagination so many ghosts, that I am in danger of being frightened as much as the old lady of Endor was at the sight of Samuel.

Many are the years in which I have seriously endeavored to strip from my mind every prejudice, and from my heart every feeling, unfavorable to Mr. Hutchinson. The subject is so familiar to my thoughts that I could draw his character faster than my pen could fly. I feel no animosity against his memory. I could write his life as coolly as that of Alexander or Cæsar. But on a deliberate second view of my own portrait of him, I should feel doubts of my own impartiality.

He was a memorable and an awful example of disappointment in the career of ambition. Cromwell and Napoleon will be more known, but neither was a more distinct example.

You may form some conjecture of my feelings, when I tell you, or, perhaps, I might more properly say, when I remind you, that he seduced from my bosom three of the most intimate friends I ever had in my life, Jonathan Sewall, Samuel Quincy, and Daniel Leonard. Every one of these had been as ardent and explicit a patriot as I was, or ever pretended to be. By means more artful, but as corrupt as any ever employed by Sir Robert Walpole, did that Jesuit seduce three of the most amiable young men from the cause of their country to their own ruin. He practised all his arts upon me. My constant answer was, "*I cannot in conscience.*" I would give the whole history in detail, but you would say, and the world would say, John Adams is an old Pharisee, thanking God that he is not like other men. I had rather they would say, he is a publican, praying God to be merciful to him, a sinner. But in either case, poor John would be accused as a fanatic or a hypocrite.

I could not write the character of Hutchinson without describing my three friends, Sewall, Quincy, and Leonard, and many others that would harrow up my soul; among the rest myself, and this would make me blush. If you desire it, however, and will give me your honor they shall not be published, I will give you a few anecdotes, of the probability of which you shall judge from your own recollections.

You say Hutchinson's moral character was good. This must be understood with great exceptions.

You say his judicial character was good. This must be construed with great limitations.

You say his private character was good. Of this I know not enough to say any thing.

Of his literary character the world will judge by his writings. They are valuable. He had great advantages from his birth, and hereditary collections of pamphlets and manuscripts, and especially from his family connections with the Mathers, and his neighborhood to Mr. Prince, for writing the history of Massachusetts Bay.

There was much affectation, much dissimulation, and, I must add, deep hypocrisy in his character. Though his father

had made a fortune by speculations in a depreciating paper currency, he had great merit in abolishing that instrument of injustice in 1750.

But who, my friend, who shall do justice to the characters of James Otis, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, who breasted a torrent of persecution from 1760 to 1775, and ever since?

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 12 December, 1816.

I return the Analysis of Dupuis, with my thanks for the loan of it. It is but a faint miniature of the original. I have read that original in twelve volumes, besides a thirteenth of plates. I have been a lover and a reader of romances all my life, from Don Quixote and Gil Blas to the Scottish Chiefs, and a hundred others. For the last year or two I have devoted myself to this kind of study, and have read fifteen volumes of Grimm, seven volumes of Tucker's Neddy Search,[1] twelve volumes of Dupuis, and Tracy's Analysis, and four volumes of Jesuitical History! Romances all! I have learned nothing of importance to me, for they have made no change in my moral or religious creed, which has, for fifty or sixty years, been contained in four short words, "Be just and good." In this result they all agree with me.

I must acknowledge, however, that I have found in Dupuis more ideas that were new to me, than in all the others. My conclusion from all of them is universal toleration. Is there any work extant so well calculated to discredit corruptions and impostures in religion as Dupuis?

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 18 December, 1816.

Your kind letter of the 13th contains much truth, and nothing but the truth. I may return to it hereafter, but at present, with

[1] The *Light of Nature Pursued, by Edward Search*, the well known work of Abraham Tucker.

your leave, I will continue a few hints on the judicial character of Chief Justice Hutchinson. I pass over that scenery, which he introduced, so showy and so shallow, so theatrical and so ecclesiastical, of scarlet and sable robes, of broad bands, and enormous tie wigs, more resembling fleeces of painted merino wool than any thing natural to man and that could breathe with him. I pass over, also, the question, whether he or his court had legal authority to establish a distinction between barristers and attorneys. Innovations, though often necessary, are always dangerous.

But to return to writs of assistance. In February term, 1761, the new Chief Justice and his court ordered Chief Justice Sewall's question to be argued in the council chamber, and that argument produced the American Revolution. Otis demonstrated the illegality, the unconstitutionality, the iniquity and inhumanity of that writ in so clear a manner, that every man appeared to me to go away ready to take arms against it. No harangue of Demosthenes or Cicero ever had such effects upon this globe as that speech. Such was the impression, that the court dared not give judgment in favor of it.[1] *Curia advisare voluit.* After many days, the Chief Justice arose, and, with that gravity and subtilty, that artless design of face, which will never fade in my memory, said, "the Court could not, at present, see any foundation for the writ of assistance, but thought proper to continue the consideration of it till next term, and, in the mean time, to write to England, and inquire what was the practice and what were the grounds of it there."

The public never was informed, what was the correspondence with England, what was the practice or the grounds of it there. The public never was informed of the judgment of the Court. No judge ever gave his opinion, or discussed the question in public. After six or nine months, we heard enough of custom-house officers breaking houses, cellars, shops, ships, casks, and bales, in search of prohibited and uncustomed goods, by virtue of writs of assistance. Is this the conduct of "a good, judicial character" in a free country, and under a government of laws? Jeffreys himself was never more Jesuitical nor more arbitrary.

[1] Hutchinson himself admits that, "if judgment had then been given, it is uncertain on which side it would have been." *History of Massachusetts*, vol. iii. p. 94.

In my next, I may give you more proofs of his "good judicial character," in the trial of Michael Corbet and his three messmates, for killing Lieutenant Panton, the commander of a press-gang from the Rose frigate.[1] When courts of justice dare not speak in open air, nor see the daylight, where is life, liberty, or property?

Were I writing history, I should not write in this style. I should study a language of more philosophical moderation and dignity. But I now express to you the feelings of my friends and myself at those times, and our opinions too.

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.

Quincy, 27 December, 1816.

I do declare that I can write Greek better than you do, though I cannot say, so well as you can if you will. I can make nothing but pothooks and trammels of the frontispiece of your amiable letter of the 15th. If you had quoted your authority, I might have found it.

Jesus is benevolence personified, an example for all men. Dupuis has made no alteration in my opinions of the Christian religion, in its primitive purity and simplicity, which I have entertained for more than sixty years. It is the religion of reason, equity, and love; it is the religion of the head and of the heart.

It would be idle for me to write observations upon Dupuis. I must fill thirteen volumes. If I was twenty-five years old, and had the necessary books and leisure, I would write an answer to Dupuis; but when, or where, or how should I get it printed? Dupuis can be answered, to the honor and advantage of the Christian religion as I understand it. To this end I must study astrology as well as astronomy, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, and Sanscrit.

But to leave Dupuis to be answered or reviewed in Edinburgh or London, I must inquire into the attributes given by

[1] This letter is printed in vol. ii. p. 224, note.

the ancient nations to their divinities; gods with stars and new moons in their foreheads or on their shoulders; gods with heads of dogs, horns of oxen, bulls, cows, calves, rams, sheep, or lambs; gods with the bodies of horses; gods with the tails of fishes; gods with the tails of dragons and serpents; gods with the feet of goats. The bull of Mithra; the dog of Anubis; the serpent of Esculapius!!!!

Is man the most irrational beast of the forest? Never did bullock, or sheep, or snake imagine himself a god. What, then, can all this wild theory mean? Can it be any thing but allegory founded in astrology? Your Manilius would inform you as well as Dupuis.

The Hebrew unity of Jehovah, the prohibition of all similitudes, appears to me the greatest wonder of antiquity. How could that nation preserve its creed among the monstrous theologies of all the other nations of the earth? Revelation, you will say, and especial Providence; and I will not contradict you, for I cannot say with Dupuis that a revelation is impossible or improbable.

Christianity, you will say, was a fresh revelation. I will not deny this. As I understand the Christian religion, it was, and is, a revelation. But how has it happened that millions of fables, tales, legends, have been blended with both Jewish and Christian revelation that have made them the most bloody religion that ever existed? How has it happened that all the fine arts, architecture, painting, sculpture, statuary, music, poetry, and oratory, have been prostituted, from the creation of the world, to the sordid and detestable purposes of superstition and fraud?

The eighteenth century had the honor to discover that Ocellus of Lucania, Timæus of Locris, Aristotle, Tacitus, Quintilian, and Pliny, were in the right. The philosophy of Frederic, Catharine, Buffon, De la Lande, Diderot, d'Alembert, Condorcet, d'Holbach, and Dupuis, appears to me to be no more nor less than the philosophy of those ancient men of science and letters, whose speculations came principally from India, Egypt, Chaldea, and Phœnicia. A consolatory discovery, to be sure! Let it once be revealed or demonstrated that there is no future state, and my advice to every man, woman, and child would be, as our existence would be in our own power, to take opium.

For, I am certain, there is nothing in this world worth living for but hope, and every hope will fail us, if the last hope, that of a future state, is extinguished.

I know how to sympathize with a wounded leg, having been laid up with one for two or three months, and I have felt the delightful attentions of a daughter. May you have the felicity to celebrate as many more lustres of Madam Vanderkemp as human nature can bear.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 24 January, 1817.

Bernard, Hutchinson, Oliver, the commissioners of the customs, and their satellites, had an espionage as inquisitive as zealous, and as faithful as that in France, before, during, or since the revolution, by which the Tories were better informed of the anecdote which I am about to relate to you, than the Whigs themselves were in general. That the Tory histories may not hereafter misrepresent it without detection, I will now state the facts in writing, that they may remain in your archives and mine, to be used as an antidote to the poison that may hereafter appear.[1]

The public had been long alarmed with rumors and predictions that the king, that is the ministry, would take into their own hands the payment of the salaries of the Judges of the Supreme Court. The people would not believe it; the most thinking men dreaded it. They said, "With an executive authority in a Governor possessed of an absolute negative on all the acts of the legislature, and with Judges dependent only on the Crown for salaries as well as their commissions, what protection have we? We may as well abolish all limitations, and resign our lives and liberties at once to the will of a prime minister at St. James's." You remember the controversy that General Brattle excited concerning the tenor of the Judges' commissions, and the universal anxiety that then prevailed on this subject. The des-

[1] The substance of this letter appears in another form in this work, but as there is an interval of fifteen years in the date of the two compositions, it may be interesting to the curious to compare them. See vol. ii. pp. 328 – 332.

patches at length arrived, and expectation was raised to its highest pitch of exultation and triumph on one side, and of grief, terror, degradation, and despondency on the other. The Legislature assembled, and the Governor communicated to the two houses his Majesty's commands.

It happened that I was invited to dine that day with Samuel Winthrop, an excellent character, and a predecessor in the respectable office you now hold in the Supreme Court. Arrived at his house in New Boston, I found it full of counsellors and representatives and clergy. Such a group of melancholy countenances I had rarely, if ever, seen. No conversation, except some insipid observations on the weather, till the great topic of the day was introduced, and at the same time a summons to the feast. All harps upon the willow, we sat down to a *triste* dinner, which all the delicacies before us could not enliven. A few glasses of good wine, however, in time brought up some spirit, and the conversation assumed a little vigor, but it was the energy of grief, complaint, and despair. All expressed their detestation and horror of the insidious ministerial plot, but all agreed that it was irremediable. There was no means or mode of opposing or resisting it.

Indignation, and despair too, boiled in my breast as ardently as in any of them, though, as the company were so much superior to me in age and station, I had not said any thing; but Dr. Winthrop, the professor, then of the council, observing my silence, and perhaps my countenance, said, "Mr. Adams, what is your opinion? Can you think of any way of escaping this snare?" My answer was, "No, Sir; I am as much at a loss as any of the company. I agree with all the gentlemen, that petitions and remonstrances to king or parliament will be ineffectual. Nothing but force will succeed; but I would try one project before I had recourse to the last reason and fitness of things." The company cried out, almost or quite together, "What project is that? What would you do?" A. "I would impeach the judges." "Impeach the judges! How? Where? Who *can* impeach them?" A. "The House of Representatives." "The House of Representatives! Before whom? Before the House of Lords in England?" A. "No, surely. You might as well impeach them before Lord North alone." "Where, then?" A. "Before the Governor and

Council." "Is there any precedent for that?" A. "If there is not, it is now high time that a precedent should be set." "The Governor and Council will not receive the impeachment." A. "I know that very well, but the record of it will stand upon the journals, be published in pamphlets and newspapers, and perhaps make the judges repent of their salaries, and decline them; perhaps make it too troublesome to hold them." "What right had we to impeach anybody?" A. "Our House of Representatives have the same right to impeach as the House of Commons has in England, and our Governor and Council have the same right and duty to receive and hear impeachments as the King and House of Lords have in Parliament. If the Governor and Council would not do their duty, that would not be the fault of the people; their representatives ought nevertheless to do theirs." Some of the company said the idea was so new to them, that they wished I would show them some reasons for my opinion that we had the right. I repeated to them the clause of the charter, which I relied on, the constant practice in England, and the necessity of such a power and practice in every free government.

The company dispersed, and I went home. Dr. Cooper and others were excellent hands to spread a rumor, and before nine o'clock half the town and most of the members of the General Court had in their heads the idea of an impeachment. The next morning early, Major Hawley, of Northampton, came to my house under great concern, and said he heard that I had yesterday, in a public company, suggested a thought of impeaching the judges; that report had got about and had excited some uneasiness, and he desired to know my meaning. I invited him into my office, opened the charter, and requested him to read the paragraphs that I had marked. I then produced to him that volume of Selden's works which contains his treatise on Judicature and Parliament; other authorities in law were produced to him, and the State Trials, and a profusion of impeachments with which that work abounds. Major Hawley, who was one of the best men in the province, and one of the ablest lawyers and best speakers in the legislature, was struck with surprise. He said, "I know not what to think. This is in a manner all new to me. I must think of it." You, Mr. Tudor, will not wonder at Major Hawley's embarrassment, if you

recollect that my copy of Selden's works, of the State Trials and the Statutes at Large, were the only ones in Boston at that time. I think, also, Mr. Tudor, that you must know that I imported from England Selden, State Trials, and Statutes at Large. Now, Sir, will the editor of the North American Review, will the Athenæum Shaw, will the Historical Society, will the Society of Antiquarians, please to investigate this important point? My opinion is that there was not another copy of either of those works in the United States. Let them convict me of error, if they can.

My strange brother, Robert Treat Paine, came to me with grief and terror in his face and manners. He said he had heard that I talked of an impeachment of the Judges; that it had excited a great deal of conversation, and that it seemed to prevail, and that, according to all appearances, it would be brought forward in the House; he was very uneasy about it, &c. I knew the man. Instead of entering into particular conversation with him, I took him into my office, and showed him all that I had before shown to Major Hawley. He had not patience to read much, and went away with the same anxious brow. This man had an upright heart, an abundance of wit, and upon the whole a deeper policy than I had. He soon found, however, that the impeachment was popular and would prevail, and prudently acquiesced. Major Hawley, always conscientious, always deliberate, always cautious, had not slept soundly. What were his dreams about impeachment, I know not. But this I know; he drove away to Cambridge to consult Judge Trowbridge, and appealed to his conscience. The charter was called for; Selden and the State Trials were quoted. Trowbridge said to him what I had said before, that "the power of impeachment was essential to a free government; that the charter had given it to our House of Representatives as clearly as the Constitution, in the common law or immemorial usage, had given it to the House of Commons in England." This was all he could say, though he lamented the occasion of it.

Major Hawley returned full in the faith. An impeachment was voted, a committee appointed to prepare articles. But Major Hawley insisted upon it in private with the committee, that they should consult me, and take my advice upon every article before they reported it to the House. Such was the

state of parties at that moment, that the patriots could carry nothing in the House without the support of Major Hawley. The committee very politely requested me to meet them. To avoid all questions about time and place, I invited them to my house in the evening. They came, and produced a draft of articles, which were examined, considered, and discussed, article by article and paragraph by paragraph. I objected to some, and proposed alterations in others; sometimes succeeded, and often failed. You know the majority decide upon such occasions. The result, upon the whole, was not satisfactory to me in all points, but I was not responsible.

Next day I met Ben Gridley, who accosted me in his pompous style, "Brother Adams, you keep late hours! Last night I saw a host of senators vomit forth from your door after midnight." Now, brother Tudor, judge you whether this whole transaction was not as well known at head-quarters, and better too, than in the House of Representatives. This confidence of Major Hawley in me became an object of jealousy to the patriots. Not only Mr. Paine, but Mr. Adams and Mr. Hancock could not refrain from expressing, at times, their feeling of it. But they could do nothing without Major Hawley. These little passions, of which even the Apostles could not wholly divest themselves, have in all ages been small causes of great events; too small, indeed, to be described by historians, or even known to them or suspected by them.

The articles were reported to the House, discussed, accepted; the impeachment voted, and sent up in form to the Governor and Council; rejected, of course, as everybody knew beforehand that it would be; but it remained on the journals of the House, was printed in the newspapers, and went abroad into the world. And what were the consequences? Chief Justice Oliver and his Superior Court, your Supreme Judicial Court, commenced their regular circuit. The Chief Justice opened his court as usual. Grand Jurors and Petit Jurors refused to take their oaths. They never, as I believe, could prevail on one Juror to take the oath. I attended at the bar in two counties, and I heard Grand Jurors and Petit Jurors say to Chief Justice Oliver to his face, "The Chief Justice of this Court stands impeached, by the representatives of the people, of high crimes and misdemeanors, and of a conspiracy against the char-

ter privileges of the people. I therefore cannot serve as a Juror, or take the oath." The cool, calm, sedate intrepidity with which these honest freeholders went through this fiery trial, filled my eyes and my heart.

In one word, the royal government was from that moment laid prostrate in the dust, and has never since revived in substance, though a dark shadow of the hobgoblin haunts me at times to this day.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 4 February, 1817.

Your worthy son, William, in a kind letter of the 2d, has asked my opinion of "Pownall's Administration of the Colonies, and of its author." It is nearly forty years since I read the work, and I cannot read it again; but I would advise Mr. Tudor to read it, and his Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, and another to his own Sovereign, and a third to the Sovereigns of the United States of America, not forgetting a small tract concerning the Gulf Stream.

A reader who has patience to search for good sense, in an uncouth and disgusting style, will find in those writings proofs of a thinking mind, and more sagacity than in any thing that remains of his two more celebrated successors, Bernard or Hutchinson.

I am sorry that the name of Pownalborough has been changed to that of Dresden, that of a virtuous and sensible man to that of a scene of frivolity. Pownall was a Whig, a friend of liberty, a lover of his country, and he considered North America a part of his country as much as England, Scotland, or Ireland.

Your son has requested my "opinion of the man as well as of his administration." What an explosion of reminiscences has this question excited in me! To answer this question, I must draw the character of Chief Justice Pratt, of Colonel and Judge John Tyng, of Hutchinsons and Olivers, as well as Samuel Waterhouse.

There is an overweening fondness for representing this country as a scene of liberty, equality, fraternity, union, harmony,

and benevolence. But let not your sons or mine deceive themselves. This country, like all others, has been a theatre of parties and feuds for near two hundred years.

Look into all our memorials, histories they cannot be called, Winslow's, Winthrop, Morton the first, Morton the second, Hubbard, Mather, Prince, and even Hutchinson himself, and then judge how sweetly harmonious our ancestors have been. There is one morsel which I beg leave to recommend to the deliberate perusal of your sons and mine. It is my friend Emerson's "History of the First Church." See there elements that have been fermenting, frothing, and foaming ever since.

There was always a court and country party in the province. The town of Boston had been, almost invariably, at the head of the opposition, that is, of the country party. If, at any time, it had coincided with a Governor, it had always been by a small majority against a numerous, powerful, and formidable minority in opposition.

Under Shirley's administration, which had been supported by Hutchinson, Oliver, Otis, Trowbridge, Leonard, Chandler, Stoddard, Choate, &c., there had been a formidable opposition in Boston, that very much embarrassed the government. Pownall, when he came into administration, thought there ought to be a good understanding between the capital and country, and a harmony between both and the government. This conciliatory and comprehensive system was too refined and too sublime for human nature in this contentious, warring world. In pursuance of it, however, he sometimes consulted Pratt and Tyng; and their advice did not always coincide with that of Hutchinson and Oliver. These aspiring spirits, who had been the prime ministers and principal agents of Shirley, excepting a constant understanding of Church of England influence that would cost a volume to explain, could not bear the competition of Pratt and Tyng, much less to be overruled and supplanted by them.

Accordingly, they and their adherents blew them up, as many others, before and since, have been blown up, and many others supported, by profligate scribblers. Not a quaint expression in his speeches, writings, or conversations, escaped satire and ridicule. Every thing he said or did was perverted. When Whiggism, under Pitt, declined, and when Toryism, under Bute, revived, Pownall faded, and Bernard flourished.

If the plan of subjugating America did not originate in Shirley's administration, it was meditated, and matured, and digested, and there Hutchinson learned it. Pownall did not favor it, and therefore displeased Hutchinson, and his friends in America, and his patrons in Scotland and England. Pownall was the most constitutional and national Governor, in my opinion, who ever represented the crown in this province. He engaged in no intrigues, he favored no conspiracies against the liberties of America. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.*

I have been deeply afflicted with a mixture of pity, grief, and indignation, on reading in Dr. Eliot's Biographical Dictionary the slurs on the character of Mr. Pratt. His malignity was hereditary. His father was Hutchinson's parish priest, and his devoted idolater. Pratt was a man, in talents, learning, and integrity, too, far superior to Hutchinson and his priestly disciples.

The most magnanimous vote that ever was passed in North America, was that of a statue to Lord Howe. Pratt exerted all his eloquence, and I never heard eloquence more impressive, except from James Otis, Junior, in support of that vote. Hutchinson's party put that statue in motion. It marched through the province, and knocked down all before it. Not only De Witt, of Marlborough, who had never before, for twenty years, voted for a grant of money, but Pratt and Tyng, in our noble town of Boston, fell a sacrifice, and with them Pownall's administration. It was an affair of five hundred pounds. I have heard Brigadier Ruggles say, "that statue strided through the streets of Marlborough, and, roaring like a lion, shook down old De Witt." Our nation have this year, according to Mr. Randolph, discarded "*their watch-dogs*" for a *per diem*.[1]

It must be acknowledged, that our good people are steady to one principle, when they think they understand it. They will contend for dollars, sometimes; but suffer themselves to be pillaged for ages by old tenor, continental currency, and banks as numerous as the stars, of millions of eagles. I saw Pownall in public as other people did, during his administration; but

[1] This alludes to an act of Congress, passed at this period, changing the compensation of the members from the old mode of payment, according to the days of service, to a fixed annual sum. Almost all those who voted for it lost their seats, and the law was repealed.

he never saw me, and, probably, never heard of me. I never met him, and was not even presented at a dinner that he gave to the bar. But in 1783 he made me repeated visits with his lady at Auteuil, near Paris, and dined with us more than once. Near the end of the same year, he visited me again at Stockdale's in Piccadilly. In 1785, 1786, 1787, he visited me occasionally, and I returned his visits, and, at his invitation, went out and dined with him at his seat on Richmond Hill. He was very reserved on all the events of his administration, and on all the characters of his friends and enemies. Though manifestly a disappointed man, he was less dejected and less embittered than most men I have known in such circumstances. The loss of his wife affected him most. I heard him make a candid and conciliatory speech in the Royal Society, on a heated contest, when Horseley displayed a very different spirit. He voluntarily relinquished his seat in parliament, and appeared no more in public affairs.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 29 March, 1817.

Is your daughter, Mrs. Stuart, who I am credibly informed is one of the most accomplished of ladies, a painter? Are you acquainted with Miss Lydia Smith, who, I am also credibly informed, is one of the most accomplished ladies, and a painter? Do you know Mr. Sargent? Do you correspond with your old companion in arms, Colonel John Trumbull? Do you think Fisher will be an historical painter?

Whenever you shall find a painter, male or female, I pray you to suggest a scene and a subject for the pencil.

The scene is the Council Chamber in the old Town House in Boston. The date is in the month of February, 1761, nine years before you entered my office in Cole Lane. As this was five years before you entered college, you must have been in the second form of master Lovell's school.

That council chamber was as respectable an apartment as the House of Commons or the House of Lords in Great Britain, in proportion, or that in the State House in Philadelphia,

in which the declaration of independence was signed, in 1776. In this chamber, round a great fire, were seated five Judges, with Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson at their head, as Chief Justice, all arrayed in their new, fresh, rich robes of scarlet English broadcloth; in their large cambric bands, and immense judicial wigs. In this chamber were seated at a long table all the barristers at law of Boston, and of the neighboring county of Middlesex, in gowns, bands, and tie wigs. They were not seated on ivory chairs, but their dress was more solemn and more pompous than that of the Roman Senate, when the Gauls broke in upon them.

In a corner of the room must be placed as a spectator and an auditor, wit, sense, imagination, genius, pathos, reason, prudence, eloquence, learning, and immense reading, hanging by the shoulders on two crutches, covered with a great cloth coat, in the person of Mr. Pratt, who had been solicited on both sides, but would engage on neither, being, as Chief Justice of New York, about to leave Boston forever. Two portraits, at more than full length, of King Charles the Second and of King James the Second, in splendid golden frames, were hung up on the most conspicuous sides of the apartment. If my young eyes or old memory have not deceived me, these were as fine pictures as I ever saw; the colors of the royal ermines and long flowing robes were the most glowing, the figures the most noble and graceful, the features the most distinct and characteristic, far superior to those of the King and Queen of France in the Senate chamber of Congress — these were worthy of the pencils of Rubens and Vandyke. There was no painter in England capable of them at that time. They had been sent over without frames in Governor Pownall's time, but he was no admirer of Charles or James. The pictures were stowed away in a garret, among rubbish, till Governor Bernard came, who had them cleaned, superbly framed, and placed in council for the admiration and imitation of all men — no doubt with the advice and concurrence of Hutchinson and all his nebula of stars and satellites.

One circumstance more. Samuel Quincy and John Adams had been admitted barristers at that term. John was the youngest; he should be painted looking like a short thick archbishop of Canterbury, seated at the table with a pen in his hand, lost

in admiration, now and then minuting those poor notes which your pupil, Judge Minot, has printed in his history,[1] with some interpolations. I will copy them from the book, and then point out those interpolations.[2]

. . . . . .

You have now the stage and the scenery; next follows a narration of the subject. I rather think that we lawyers ought to call it a brief of the cause.

When the British ministry received from General Amherst his despatches, announcing the conquest of Montreal, and the consequent annihilation of the French government in America, in 1759, they immediately conceived the design, and took the resolution, of conquering the English colonies, and subjecting them to the unlimited authority of Parliament. With this view and intention they sent orders and instructions to the collector of the customs in Boston, Mr. Charles Paxton, to apply to the civil authority for writs of assistance, to enable the custom-house officers, tidewaiters, landwaiters, and all, to command all sheriffs and constables, &c., to attend and aid them in breaking open houses, stores, shops, cellars, ships, bales, trunks, chests, casks, packages of all sorts, to search for goods, wares, and merchandises, which had been imported against the prohibitions or without paying the taxes imposed by certain acts of Parliament, called the acts of trade; that is, by certain parliamentary statutes, which had been procured to be passed from time to time for a century before, by a combination of selfish intrigues between West India planters and North American royal governors. These acts never had been executed as revenue laws, and there never had been a time, when they would have been or could have been obeyed as such.

Mr. Paxton, no doubt consulting with Governor Bernard, Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, and all the principal crown officers, thought it not prudent to commence his operations in Boston. For obvious reasons, he instructed his deputy collector in Salem, Mr. Cockle, to apply by petition to the Superior Court, in November, 1760, then sitting in that town, for writs

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 89 – 99.

[2] The extract is omitted, as the same speech is printed, with the omission of the interpolations, in vol. ii. of this work, Appendix, p. 523. It was not in the letter as first published.

of assistance. Stephen Sewall was then Chief Justice of that Court, an able man, an uncorrupted American, and a sincere friend of liberty, civil and religious. He expressed great doubts of the legality of such a writ, and of the authority of the Court to grant it. Not one of his brother judges uttered a word in favor of it; but as it was an application on the part of the crown, it must be heard and determined. After consultation, the Court ordered the question to be argued at the next February term in Boston, namely in 1761.

In the mean time Chief Justice Sewall died, and Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson was appointed Chief Justice of that Court in his stead. Every observing and thinking man knew that this appointment was made for the direct purpose of deciding this question in favor of the crown, and all others in which it should be interested. An alarm was spread far and wide. Merchants of Salem and Boston applied to Mr. Pratt, who refused, and to Mr. Otis and Mr. Thacher, who accepted, to defend them against the terrible menacing monster, the writ of assistance. Great fees were offered, but Otis, and, I believe, Thacher, would accept of none. "In such a cause," said Otis, "I despise all fees."

I have given you a sketch of the stage, and the scenery, and the brief of the cause, or, if you like the phrase better, the tragedy, comedy, or farce.

Now for the actors and performers. Mr. Gridley argued with his characteristic learning, ingenuity, and dignity, and said every thing that could be said in favor of Cockle's petition; all depending, however, on the "if the Parliament of Great Britain is the sovereign legislature of all the British empire." Mr. Thacher followed him on the other side, and argued with the softness of manners, the ingenuity and cool reasoning, which were remarkable in his amiable character.

But Otis was a flame of fire! — with a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eye into futurity, and a torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away every thing before him. American independence was then and there born; the seeds of patriots and heroes were then and there sown, to defend the vigorous youth, the *non sine Diis animosus infans.* Every man of a

crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of assistance. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then and there the child Independence was born. In fifteen years, namely in 1776, he grew up to manhood, and declared himself free.

The Court adjourned for consideration, and after some days, at the close of the term, Hutchinson, Chief Justice, arose and said, "The Court has considered the subject of writs of assistance, and can see no foundation for such a writ; but, as the practice in England is not known, it has been thought best to continue the question until next term, that in the mean time opportunity may be given to write to England for information concerning the subject." In six months the next term arrived, but no judgment was pronounced, no letters from England were produced, and nothing more was ever said in Court concerning writs of assistance; but it was generally reported and understood that the Court clandestinely granted them, and the custom-house officers had them in their pockets, though I never knew that they dared to produce them or execute them in any one instance.

Mr. Otis's popularity was without bounds. In May, 1761, he was elected into the House of Representatives by an almost unanimous vote. On the week of his election, I happened to be at Worcester, attending the Court of Common Pleas, of which Brigadier Ruggles was Chief Justice, when the news arrived from Boston of Mr. Otis's election. You can have no idea of the consternation among the government people. Chief Justice Ruggles, at dinner at Colonel Chandler's on that day, said, "Out of this election will arise a d——d faction, which will shake this province to its foundation." Ruggles's foresight reached not beyond his nose. That election has shaken two continents, and will shake all four. For ten years Mr. Otis, at the head of his country's cause, conducted the town of Boston, and the people of the province, with a prudence and fortitude, at every sacrifice of personal interest, and amidst unceasing persecution, which would have done honor to the most virtuous patriot or martyr of antiquity.

The minutes of Mr. Otis's argument are no better a representation of it than the gleam of a glow-worm to the

meridian blaze of the sun. I fear I shall make you repent bringing out the old gentleman. *Ridendo dicere verum quid vetat?*

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 15 April, 1817.

I have received your obliging favor of the 8th, but cannot consent to your resolution to ask no more questions. Your questions revive my sluggish memory. Since our national legislature have established a national painter, — a wise measure, for which I thank them, — my imagination runs upon the art, and has already painted, I know not how many, historical pictures. I have sent you one; give me leave to send another. The bloody rencounter between the citizens and the soldiers, on the 5th of March, 1770, produced a tremendous sensation throughout the town and country. The people assembled first at Faneuil Hall, and adjourned to the Old South Church, to the number, as was conjectured, of ten or twelve thousand men, among whom were the most virtuous, substantial, independent, disinterested, and intelligent citizens. They formed themselves into a regular deliberative body, chose their moderator and secretary, entered into discussions, deliberations, and debates, adopted resolutions, appointed committees. What has become of these records, Mr. Tudor? Where are they? Their resolutions in public were conformable to those of every man in private, who dared to express his thoughts or his feelings, "that the regular soldiers should be banished from the town at all hazards." Jonathan Williams, a very pious, inoffensive, and conscientious gentleman, was their Moderator. A remonstrance to the Governor, or the Governor and Council, was ordained, and a demand that the regular troops should be removed from the town. A committee was appointed to present this remonstrance, of which Samuel Adams was the chairman.

Now for the picture. The theatre and the scenery are the same with those at the discussion of writs of assistance. The same glorious portraits of King Charles II. and King James II., to which might be added, and should be added, little miserable

likenesses of Governor Winthrop, Governor Bradstreet, Governor Endicott, and Governor Belcher, hung up in obscure corners of the room. Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, commander-in-chief in the absence of the Governor, must be placed at the head of the council table. Lieutenant-Colonel Dalrymple, commander-in-chief of his Majesty's military forces, taking rank of all his Majesty's counsellors, must be seated by the side of the Lieutenant-Governor and commander-in-chief of the province. Eight-and-twenty counsellors must be painted, all seated at the council board. Let me see — what costume? What was the fashion of that day, in the month of March? Large white wigs, English scarlet cloth cloaks, some of them with gold-laced hats, not on their heads, indeed, in so august a presence, but on the table before them, or under the table beneath them. Before these illustrious personages appeared Samuel Adams, a member of the House of Representatives and their clerk, now at the head of the committee of the great assembly at the Old South Church. Thucydides, Livy, or Sallust would make a speech for him, or, perhaps, the Italian Botta, if he had known any thing of this transaction, — one of the most important of the revolution, — but I am wholly incapable of it; and, if I had vanity enough to think myself capable of it, should not dare to attempt it. He represented the state of the town and the country; the dangerous, ruinous, and fatal effects of standing armies in populous cities in time of peace, and the determined resolution of the public, that the regular troops, at all events should be removed from the town. Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, then commander-in-chief, at the head of a trembling council, said, "he had no authority over the king's troops; that they had their separate commander and separate orders and instructions, and that he could not interfere with them." Mr. Adams instantly appealed to the charter of the province, by which the Governor, and in his absence the Lieutenant-Governor, was constituted commander-in-chief of all the military and naval power within its jurisdiction. So obviously true and so irrefragable was the reply, that it is astonishing that Mr. Hutchinson should have so grossly betrayed the Constitution, and so atrociously have violated the duties of his office by asserting the contrary. But either the fears or the ambition of this gentleman, upon this and many other occasions, especially

in his controversy with the two houses, three years afterwards, on the supremacy of Parliament, appear to have totally disarranged his understanding. He certainly asserted in public, in the most solemn manner, a multitude of the roundest falsehoods, which he must have known to be such, and which he must have known could be easily and would certainly be detected, if he had not wholly lost his memory, even of his own public writings. You, Mr. Tudor, knew Mr. Adams from your childhood to his death. In his common appearance he was a plain, simple, decent citizen, of middling stature, dress, and manners. He had an exquisite ear for music, and a charming voice, when he pleased to exert it. Yet his ordinary speeches in town meetings, in the House of Representatives, and in Congress exhibited nothing extraordinary; but, upon great occasions, when his deeper feelings were excited, he erected himself, or rather nature seemed to erect him, without the smallest symptom of affectation, into an upright dignity of figure and gesture, and gave a harmony to his voice which made a strong impression on spectators and auditors, — the more lasting for the purity, correctness, and nervous elegance of his style.

This was a delicate and a dangerous crisis. The question in the last resort was, whether the town of Boston should become a scene of carnage and desolation, or not? Humanity to the soldiers conspired with a regard for the safety of the town, in suggesting the wise measure of calling the town together to deliberate. For nothing short of the most solemn promises to the people that the soldiers should, at all hazards, be driven from the town, had preserved its peace. Not only the immense assemblies of the people from day to day, but military arrangements from night to night, were necessary to keep the people and the soldiers from getting together by the ears. The life of a red coat would not have been safe in any street or corner of the town. Nor would the lives of the inhabitants have been much more secure. The whole militia of the city was in requisition, and military watches and guards were everywhere placed. We were all upon a level; no man was exempted; our military officers were our only superiors. I had the honor to be summoned, in my turn, and attended at the State House with my musket and bayonet, my broadsword and cartridge-box, under

the command of the famous Paddock. I know you will laugh at my military figure; but I believe there was not a more obedient soldier in the regiment, nor one more impartial between the people and the regulars. In this character I was upon duty all night in my turn. No man appeared more anxious or more deeply impressed with a sense of danger on all sides than our commander, Paddock. He called me, common soldier as I was, frequently to his councils. I had a great deal of conversation with him, and no man appeared more apprehensive of a fatal calamity to the town or more zealous by every prudent measure to prevent it.

Such was the situation of affairs, when Samuel Adams was reasoning with Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant-Colonel Dalrymple. He had fairly driven them from all their outworks, breastworks, and entrenchments, to their citadel. There they paused and considered and deliberated. The heads of Hutchinson and Dalrymple were laid together in whispers for a long time; when the whispering ceased, a long and solemn pause ensued, extremely painful to an impatient, expecting audience. Hutchinson, in time, broke silence; he had consulted with Colonel Dalrymple, and the Colonel had authorized him to say, that he might order one regiment down to the castle, if that would satisfy the people. With a self-recollection, a self-possession, a self-command, a presence of mind that was admired by every man present, Samuel Adams arose with an air of dignity and majesty, of which he was sometimes capable, stretched forth his arm, though even then quivering with palsy, and with an harmonious voice and decisive tone said, "If the Lieutenant-Governor or Colonel Dalrymple, or both together, have authority to remove one regiment, they have authority to remove two, and nothing short of the total evacuation of the town by all the regular troops, will satisfy the public mind or preserve the peace of the province."

These few words thrilled through the veins of every man in the audience, and produced the great result. After a little awkward hesitation, it was agreed that the town should be evacuated, and both regiments sent to the castle.

After all this gravity, it is merry enough to relate that William Molineux was obliged to march side by side with the

commander of some of these troops, to protect them from the indignation of the people, in their progress to the wharf of embarcation for the castle. Nor is it less amusing that Lord North, as I was repeatedly and credibly informed in England, with his characteristic mixture of good humor and sarcasm, ever after called these troops by the title of "Sam Adams's two regiments."

The painter should seize upon the critical moment, when Samuel Adams stretched out his arm, and made his last speech.

It will be as difficult to do justice as to paint an Apollo; and the transaction deserves to be painted as much as the surrender of Burgoyne. Whether any artist will ever attempt it, I know not.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 19 April, 1817.

My loving and beloved friend, Pickering, has been pleased to inform the world, that I have "few friends." I wanted to whip the rogue, and I had it in my power, if it had been in my will to do it, till the blood came. But all my real friends, as I thought them, with Dexter and Gray at their head, insisted that I should not say a word; that "nothing that such a person could write, would do me the least injury;" that "it would betray the constitution and the government, if a President, out or in, should enter into a newspaper controversy with one of his ministers, whom he had removed from his office, in justification of himself for that removal or any thing else." And they talked a great deal about "*the dignity*" of the office of President, which I do not find that any other persons, public or private, regard very much.

Nevertheless, I fear that Mr. Pickering's information is too true. It is impossible that any man should run such a gauntlet as I have been driven through, and have many friends at last. This "all who know me, know," though I cannot say "who love me, tell." I have, however, either friends, who

wish to amuse and solace my old age, or enemies, who mean to heap coals of fire on my head, and kill me with kindness, for they overwhelm me with books from all quarters, enough to obfuscate all eyes, and smother and stifle all human understanding — Chateaubriand, Grimm, Tucker, Dupuis, La Harpe, Sismondi, Eustace, a new translation of Herodotus, by Beloe, with more notes than text. What shall I do with all this lumber? I make my "woman-kind," as the Antiquary expresses it, read to me all the English; but, as they will not read the French, I am obliged to excruciate my eyes to read it myself. And all to what purpose? I verily believe I was as wise and good seventy years ago, as I am now. At that period Lemuel Bryant was my parish priest, and Joseph Cleverly my Latin schoolmaster. Lemuel was a jocular and liberal scholar and divine, Joseph a scholar and a gentleman, but a bigoted Episcopalian of the school of Bishop Saunders and Dr. Hicks; a downright, conscientious, passive obedience man in church and state. The parson and the pedagogue lived much together, but were eternally disputing about government and religion. One day, when the schoolmaster had been more than commonly fanatical, and declared, "if he were a monarch, he would have but one religion in his dominions," the parson coolly replied, "Cleverly! you would be the best man in the world, if you had no religion." Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, "this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there was no religion in it!!!" But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company — I mean hell. So far from believing in the total and universal depravity of human nature, I believe there is no individual totally depraved. The most abandoned scoundrel that ever existed, never yet wholly extinguished his conscience, and, while conscience remains, there is some religion. Popes, Jesuists, and Sorbonnists, and Inquisitors, have some conscience and some religion. So had Marius and Sylla. Cæsar, Catiline, and Antony, and Augustus, had not much more, let Virgil and Horace say what they will. What shall we think of Virgil and Horace, Sallust, Quintilian, Pliny, and even Tacitus? And even Cicero, Brutus, and Seneca? Pompey I leave out

of the question, as a mere politician and a soldier. Every one of these great creatures has left indelible marks of conscience, and, consequently, of religion, though every one of them has left abundant proofs of profligate violations of their conscience, by their little and great passions and paltry interests.

The vast prospect of mankind, which these books have passed in review before me, from the most ancient records, histories, traditions, and fables that remain to us, to the present day, has sickened my very soul, and almost reconciled me to Swift's travels among the Yahoos. Yet I never can be a misanthrope. *Homo sum.* I must hate myself before I can hate my fellow-men, and that I cannot and will not do. No, I will not hate any of them, base, brutal, and devilish as some of them have been to me. From the bottom of my soul I pity my fellow-men.. Fears and terrors appear to have produced a universal credulity. Fears of calamities in life, and punishments after death, seem to have possessed the souls of all men. But fears of pain and death here do not seem to have been so unconquerable as fears of what is to come hereafter. Priests, hierophants, popes, despots, emperors, kings, princes, nobles, have been as credulous as shoe-blacks, boots, and kitchen-scullions. The former seem to have believed in their divine rights as sincerely as the latter. *Auto-da-fés* in Spain and Portugal, have been celebrated with as good faith as excommunications have been refused[1] in Philadelphia. How it is possible that mankind should submit to be governed as they have been, is to me an inscrutable mystery. How they could bear to be taxed to build the temple of Diana at Ephesus, the pyramids of Egypt, Saint Peter's at Rome, Notre Dame at Paris, St. Paul's in London, with a million *et ceteras*, when my navy yards and my *quasi* army made such a popular clamor, I know not. Yet my peccadilloes never excited such a rage as the late compensation law!!!

I congratulate you on the late election in Connecticut. It is a kind of epocha. Several causes have conspired; one, which you would not suspect. Some one, no doubt instigated by the devil, has taken it into his head to print a new edition of the "Independent Whig," even in Connecticut, and has scattered

[1] So in the copy, but evidently an error.

the volumes through the State. These volumes, it is said, have produced a burst of indignation against priestcraft, bigotry, and intolerance, and, in conjunction with other causes, have produced the late election. When writing to you, I never know when to subscribe

JOHN ADAMS.

TO JAMES MADISON.

Quincy, 22 April, 1817.

As I can make no apology for so long forgetting to return the volumes inclosed, I must, without qualification, beg your pardon. This work, though it bears the name of Condorcet alone, was understood to be written in concert between him and his great patron, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, as well as the "New Haven," and several other publications in favor of a government in one centre, — genuine disciples of M. Turgot. I was personally treated with great kindness by these three great and good men. But I lamented and deplored, notwithstanding their profound science and learning, what appeared to me their blind infatuation to a chimera. I shuddered at the prospect of what appeared to me inevitable consequences of their theory, of which they made no secret. I wondered the more at this, because the Abbé de Mably was their intimate friend, their social and convivial companion, whose writings were familiar to them.

The truth is, that none of these gentlemen had ever had any experience of a free government. It is equally true, that they had never deliberately thought, or freely spoken, or closely reasoned upon government, as it appears in history, as it is founded in nature, or as it has been represented by philosophers, priests, and politicians, who have written upon the subject. They have picked up scraps, but digested nothing. Condorcet's Observations on the twenty-ninth book of the Spirit of Laws; Helvetius, too, in his Letters to Montesquieu, printed in Mr. Jefferson's translation of Tracy; Condorcet's Life of Turgot; his Progress of the Human Mind, and even Necker's Executive Power, appear to me the most pedantical writings that ages have produced. Every one of these writers must be an original

genius. He must discover something that no man had ever conceived before him. Genius with them is a more privileged order than ever existed among men.

Is not despotism the simplest of all imaginable governments? Is not oligarchy the next, aristocracy the third, and a simple democracy of twenty-five millions of men the fourth? All these are simple governments, with a vengeance. Erect a house of a cubic form, one hundred feet square at the base, without any division within into chambers, parlors, cellars, or garrets; would not this be the simplest house that ever was built? But would it be a commodious habitation for a family? It would accommodate nothing but a kennel of hunter's hounds. These gentlemen all affect to be great admirers of nature. But where in nature do they find the models of their adored simplicity? Is it in the Mynheer Lyonnet dissections and microscopic observations on the willow caterpillar, in which he has found more veins and muscles and fibres than in the human body? No. The real wisdom, the genuine taste, the correct judgment consists in adapting necessary means to necessary ends. Here too much simplicity cannot be applied. I am not an implicit believer in the inspiration or infallibility of Montesquieu. On the contrary, it must be acknowledged, that some of these philosophers have detected many errors in his writings. But all their heads consolidated into one mighty head, would not equal the depth of his genius, or the extent of his views. Voltaire, alone, excels or equals him. When a writer on government despises, sneers, or argues against mixed governments, or a balance in government, he instantly proves himself an ideologian. To reason against a balance, because a perfect one cannot be composed or eternally preserved, is just as good sense as to reason against all morality, because no man has been perfectly virtuous. Not only Montesquieu, but the Abbé de Mably, who, some of them said, never wrote any thing but "*choses communes en style commun*," might have taught them more sense, though he, too, indeed, was not always steady nor correct in his opinions. Scattered here and there, in his writings, are correct sentiments. Accidentally his Phocion is on my table. In the second conversation, pages 45 and 46, he says, "Plato censured monarchy, pure aristocracy, and popular government. The laws are not safe under these administrations, which

leave too free a career to the passions. He dreaded the power of a prince, sole legislator, sole judge of justice and law. He was terrified, in aristocracy, with the pride and avarice of the grandees, who, believing that every thing is theirs, will sacrifice, without scruple, the interests of society to their private advantages. He shuddered, in democracy, at the caprices of a multitude, always blind, always extreme in their desires, and who will condemn to-morrow with fury that which they approve to-day with enthusiasm." What is the security against these dangers? According to Plato, Phocion, and De Mably, "an able mixture of all these governments; the public power should be divided into different parts, capable of overawing, of balancing, and of reciprocally moderating each other." In the Abbé's own remarks upon this second conversation, page 204, he says, "all the ancient philosophers thought like Plato, and the most celebrated statesmen have always wished to establish in their cities a mixed policy, which, by confirming the empire of the laws over the magistrates, and the empire of magistrates over the citizens, should unite the advantages of the three ordinary governments, and have none of their vices," &c. "To ask which is the best government, monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, is to ask what greater or lesser evils can be produced, by the passions of a prince, of a senate, or of a multitude. To ask whether a mixed government is better than any other, is to ask whether the passions are as wise, as just, and as moderate as the laws."

The accidental discovery of your books in my library, and the name of Condorcet, have drawn my thoughts to a subject, which I had long since endeavored to forget, as wholly desperate. I fear, Sir, you will wish that I had feloniously appropriated your books to my own use, rather than have returned them with so impertinent a letter. I return them with thanks for the loan of them, and with thanks for your long, laborious, able, and successful services to your country.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 1 June, 1817.

That Mr. Hutchinson repented as sincerely as Mr. Hamilton did, I doubt not. I hope the repentance of both has been ac-

cepted, and their faults pardoned. And I hope I have repented, do repent, and shall ever repent of mine, and meet them both in another world, where there will need no repentance. Such vicissitudes of fortune command compassion; I pity even Napoleon.

You "never profoundly admired Mr. Hancock. He had vanity and caprice." I can say, with truth, that I profoundly admired him, and more profoundly loved him. If he had vanity and caprice, so had I. And if his vanity and caprice made me sometimes sputter, as you know they often did, mine, I well know, had often a similar effect upon him. But these little flickerings of little passions determine nothing concerning essential characters. I knew Mr. Hancock from his cradle to his grave. He was radically generous and benevolent. He was born in this town, half way between this house and our congregational temple, son of a clergyman of this parish, and grandson of a clergyman of Lexington, both of excellent characters. We were at the same school together, as soon as we were out of petticoats. His father died when he was very young. His uncle, the most opulent merchant in Boston, who had no children, adopted him, placed him in Mr. Lovell's school, educated him at Harvard college, and then took him into his store. And what a school was this! Four large ships constantly plying between Boston and London, and other business in proportion. This was in 1755. He became an example to all the young men of the town. Wholly devoted to business, he was as regular and punctual at his store as the sun in his course. His uncle sent him to London, from whence, after a residence of about a year, he returned to his store, with the same habits of business, unaltered in manners or deportment, and pursued his employments with the same punctuality and assiduity, till the death of his uncle, who left him his business, his credit, his capital, and his fortune; who did more — he left him the protector of his widow. This lady, though her husband left her a handsome independence, would have sunk into oblivion, like so many other most excellent widows, had not the public attention been fastened upon her by the fame of her nephew. Never was a nephew to an aunt more affectionate, dutiful, or respectful. No alteration appeared in Mr. Hancock, either from his travels in England, or from his accession to the

fortune of his uncle. The same steady, regular, punctual, industrious, indefatigable man of business; and, to complete his character with the ladies, always genteelly dressed, according to the fashions of those days.

What shall I say of his fortune, his ships? His commerce was a great one. Your honored father told me, at that time, that not less than a thousand families were, every day in the year, dependent on Mr. Hancock for their daily bread. Consider his real estate in Boston, in the country, in Connecticut, and the rest of New England. Had Mr. Hancock fallen asleep to this day, he would now awake one of the richest men. Had he persevered in business as a private merchant, he might have erected a house of Medicis. Providence, however, did not intend or permit, in this instance, such a calamity to mankind. Mr. Hancock was the delight of the eyes of the whole town. There can be no doubt that he might have had his choice, and he had his choice of a companion; and that choice was very natural, a granddaughter of the great patron and most revered friend of his father. Beauty, politeness, and every domestic virtue justified his predilection.

At the time of this prosperity, I was one day walking in the mall, and, accidentally, met Samuel Adams. In taking a few turns together, we came in full view of Mr. Hancock's house. Mr. Adams, pointing to the stone building, said, "This town has done a wise thing to-day." "What?" "They have made that young man's fortune their own." His prophecy was literally fulfilled; for no man's property was ever more entirely devoted to the public. The town had, that day, chosen Mr. Hancock into the legislature of the province. The quivering anxiety of the public, under the fearful looking for of the vengeance of king, ministry, and parliament, compelled him to a constant attendance in the House; his mind was soon engrossed by public cares, alarms, and terrors; his business was left to subalterns; his private affairs neglected, and continued to be so to the end of his life. If his fortune had not been very large, he must have died as poor as Mr. S. Adams or Mr. Gerry.

I am not writing the life of Mr. Hancock; his biography would fill as many volumes as Marshall's Washington, and be quite as instructive and entertaining. Though I never injured or justly offended him, and though I spent much of my time, and suffered

unknown anxiety, in defending his property, reputation, and liberty from persecution, I cannot but reflect upon myself for not paying him more respect than I did in his lifetime. His life will, however, not ever be written. But if statues, obelisks, pyramids, or divine honors were ever merited by men, of cities or nations, James Otis, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, deserved these from the town of Boston and the United States. Such adulations, however, are monopolized by profligate libellers, by cringing flatterers, by unprincipled ambition, by sordid avarice, by griping usurers, by scheming speculators, by plundering bankers, by blind enthusiasts, by superstitious bigots, by puppies and butterflies, and by every thing but honor and virtue. Hence the universal slavery of the human species. Hence a commentary on the well known and most expressive figure of rhetoric, "It grieved the Almighty, at his heart, that he had made man." Nevertheless, this is a good world, and I thank the Almighty that he has made man.

Mr. Hancock had a delicate constitution. He was very infirm; a great part of his life was passed in acute pain. He inherited from his father, though one of the most amiable and beloved of men, a certain sensibility, a keenness of feeling, or, in more familiar language, a peevishness of temper, that sometimes disgusted and afflicted his friends. Yet it was astonishing with what patience, perseverance, and punctuality he attended to business to the last. Nor were his talents or attainments inconsiderable. They were far superior to many who have been much more celebrated. He had a great deal of political sagacity and penetration into men. He was by no means a contemptible scholar or orator. Compared with Washington, Lincoln, or Knox, he was learned. So much, for the present, of Mr. Hancock.

When, in the beginning of this letter, I agreed with you in your opinion of Mr. Hutchinson's repentance, I should have added, he had great reason for repentance. Fled, in his old age, from the detestation of a country, where he had been beloved, esteemed, and admired, and applauded with exaggeration — in short, where he had been every thing, from his infancy — to a country where he was nothing; pinched by a pension, which, though ample in Boston, would barely keep a house in London; throwing round his baleful eyes on the exiled com-

panions of his folly; hearing daily of the slaughter of his countrymen and conflagration of their cities; abhorred by the greatest men, and soundest part of the nation, and neglected, if not despised, by the rest, hardened as had been my heart against him, I assure you I was melted at the accounts I heard of his condition. Lord Townsend told me that he put an end to his own life. Though I did not believe this, I know he was ridiculed by the courtiers. They laughed at his manners at the levee, at his perpetual quotation of his brother Foster, searching his pockets for letters to read to the king, and the king turning away from him with his head up, &c.

A few words concerning S. Adams in my next.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 5 June, 1817.

You "never profoundly admired Mr. Hancock." I have suggested some hints in his favor. You "never profoundly admired Mr. Samuel Adams." I have promised you an apology for him. You may think it a weak one, for I have no talent at panegyric or apology. "There are all sorts of men in the world." This observation, you may say, is self-evident and futile; yet Mr. Locke thought it not unworthy of him to make it, and, if we reflect upon it, there is more meaning in it than meets the eye at the first blush.

You say, Mr. S. Adams "had too much sternness and pious bigotry." A man in his situation and circumstances must possess a large fund of sternness of stuff, or he will soon be annihilated. His piety ought not to be objected to him, or any other man. His bigotry, if he had any, was a fault; but he certainly had not more than Governor Hutchinson and Secretary Oliver, who, I know from personal conversation, were as stanch Trinitarians and Calvinists as he was, and treated all Arians and Arminians with more contempt and scorn than he ever did. Mr. Adams lived and conversed freely with all sectarians, in philosophy and divinity. He never imposed his creed on any one, or endeavored to make proselytes to his reli-

gious opinions. He was as far from sentencing any man to perdition, who differed from him, as Mr. Holley, Dr. Kirkland, or Dr. Freeman. If he was a Calvinist, a Calvinist he had been educated, and so had been all his ancestors for two hundred years. He had been, from his childhood, too much devoted to politics to be a profound student in metaphysics and theology, or to make extensive researches or deep investigations into such subjects. Nor had any other man attempted it, in this nation, in that age, if any one has attempted it since. Mr. Adams was an original — *sui generis, sui juris.* The variety of human characters is infinite. Nature seems to delight in showing the inexhaustibility of her resources. There never were two men alike, from the first man to the last, any more than two pebbles or two peas.

Mr. Adams was born and tempered a wedge of steel to split the knot of *lignum vitæ*, which tied North America to Great Britain. Blunderheaded as were the British ministry, they had sagacity enough to discriminate from all others, for inexorable vengeance, the two men most to be dreaded by them, Samuel Adams and John Hancock; and had not James Otis been then dead, or worse than dead, his name would have been at the head of the TRIUMVIRATE.

. . . . . .

James Otis, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock were the three most essential characters; and Great Britain knew it, though America does not. Great and important and excellent characters, aroused and excited by these, arose in Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, South Carolina, and in all the other States; but these three were the first movers, the most constant, steady, persevering springs, agents, and most disinterested sufferers and firmest pillars of the whole Revolution. I shall not attempt even to draw the outlines of the biography of Mr. Samuel Adams. Who can attempt it?

"*Quæ ante conditam condendamve urbem, poëticis magis decora fabulis, quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur, ea*"[1] *nec possum refellere. Quia non tempus, nec oculos, nec manus habeo.* But, if I had time, eyes, and fingers at my command, where should I find documents and memorials? Without the

[1] Livy finishes the sentence thus, *nec affirmare nec refellere, in animo est.* The addition in the text is by the writer.

character of Samuel Adams, the true history of the American Revolution can never be written. For fifty years, his pen, his tongue, his activity, were constantly exerted for his country without fee or reward. During that time, he was an almost incessant writer. But where are his writings? Who can collect them? And, if collected, who will ever read them? The letters he wrote and received, where are they? I have seen him, at Mrs. Yard's in Philadelphia, when he was about to leave Congress, cut up with his scissors whole bundles of letters into atoms that could never be reunited, and throw them out of the window, to be scattered by the winds. This was in summer, when he had no fire; in winter he threw whole handfuls into the fire. As we were on terms of perfect intimacy, I have joked him, perhaps rudely, upon his anxious caution. His answer was, "Whatever becomes of me, my friends shall never suffer by my negligence." This may be thought a less significant anecdote than another. Mr. Adams left the letters he had received and preserved in possession of his widow. This lady, as was natural, lent them to a confidential friend of her husband, Mr. Avery, who then was, and had been secretary of the commonwealth under the administration of Mr. Adams and Mr. Hancock. Mr. Avery informed me, that he "had them, and that they were a complete history of the Revolution." I will not say into whose hands they fell, after Mr. Avery's death, and I cannot say where they are now; but I have heard that a gentleman in Charlestown, Mr. Austin, undertook to write the life of Mr. Adams; but, finding his papers had been so garbled that the truth could not be discovered, he abandoned his design. Never will those letters, which Secretary Avery possessed, be brought together again; nor will they ever be found. So much for Mr. Adams, at present. Now for Mr. Otis.

I write no biographies or biographical sketches; I give only hints. James Otis was descended from our most ancient families. His education was the best his country afforded. He was bred to the bar under Mr. Gridley, the greatest lawyer and the greatest classic scholar I ever knew at any bar. His application was incessant and indefatigable. Justice Richard Dana has often told me, that the apartment in which Otis studied, when a pupil and a clerk of Mr. Gridley, was near his house; that he had watched him from day to day, and that he had

never known a student in law so punctual, so steady, so constant and persevering. Accordingly, as soon as he was admitted to the bar, he became a conspicuous figure. And among whom? Gridley, Pratt, Trowbridge; and he was much admired, and as much celebrated as any of them. His generous, manly, noble character, as a private gentleman, his uncommon attainments in literature, especially in the law, and his nervous, commanding eloquence at the bar, were everywhere spoken of. The government soon discerned his superiority, and commissioned him Advocate-General. He married a lady, who, in that day, was esteemed a fortune. From 1755 to 1758, I heard my master, Colonel James Putnam, of Worcester, who was a critical judge, and Mr. Trowbridge, the then Attorney-General, and his lady, constantly speaking of Otis as the greatest, the most learned, the most manly, and most honest young man of his age. All this was before I had ever seen Mr. Otis. I never saw him till late in the autumn of 1758, nor Mr. Samuel Adams till after that year.

To sum up in a few words, the two young men, whom I have known to enter the stage of life with the most luminous, unclouded prospects, and the best founded hopes, were James Otis and John Hancock. They were both essential to the Revolution, and both fell sacrifices to it. Mr. Otis, from 1760 to 1770, had correspondences in this province, in New England, in the middle and southern colonies, in England, and in Scotland. What has become of these letters and answers?

Mr. Otis, soon after my earliest acquaintance with him, lent me a summary of Greek Prosody of his own collection and composition, a work of profound learning and great labor. I had it six months in my possession, before I returned it. Since my return from Europe, I asked his daughter whether she had found that work among her father's manuscripts. She answered me with a countenance of woe that you may more easily imagine than I can describe, that she "had not a line from her father's pen; that he had spent much time, and taken great pains, to collect together all his letters and other papers, and, in one of his unhappy moments, committed them all to the flames." I have used her own expressions.

Such has been the fate of the memorials of Mr. James Otis and Mr. Samuel Adams. It was not without reason, then, that

I wrote to Mr. Niles, of Baltimore, that the true history of the American Revolution is lost forever. I could write volumes of other proofs of the same truth, before, during, and since the Revolution. But *cui bono?* They would be read by very few, and by very few of those few would be credited, and, by this minimum of a few, would be imputed to the vanity, egotism, ill humor, envy, jealousy, and disappointed ambition of your sincere friend, John Adams; for the character of this nation is strangely altered.

TO HENRY COLMAN.

Quincy, 13 June, 1817.

When I have heard you say, and you have repeatedly said it to me, that you were determined to read "The Origin of all Worships," I certainly sympathized with you; but whether that sympathy had in it more of congratulation or of compassion, I cannot say.

When you have once read Dupuis, you will find yourself irresistibly impelled to read Court de Gebelin's Primitive World, and then Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, and then Sir William Jones's works, and then Herodotus, and all the Greek historians, and then over again your Eustace, and Simond, and last, not least, Hugh Farmer's four volumes, containing all his works, namely, his Temptation and his Worship of Human Spirits, his Miracles, and his Demons. To these you will wish to add Sir John Malcolm's recent History of Persia, and the millions of authorities quoted by all these writers.

And, when you shall have done all this, you will find yourself precisely where you are now, an adorer of the Christian religion in its purity, mourning over the knavery and folly of your species, and, above all, deploring the corruptions and heathenish superstitions and idolatries introduced into the religion of Jesus by his professed disciples and "most holy priests."

Were your life as useless as mine, which, I am confident, it never can be, you might waste your time, as I have done agreeably enough, in these enigmatical amusements. It is

curions that Gebelin, Bryant, Jones, and Dupuis, and Farmer should have composed their systems without any knowledge of each other. Had they been united in a council, they might have been agreed; for, it seems to me, that a consistent plan might be extracted from them all, compared together.

That you may be long continued in your benevolent studies and labors, is the prayer of your friend.

TO JAMES MADISON.

Quincy, 17 June, 1817.

Accept my thanks for your favor of last month. The safe arrival of your books has quieted my conscience.

There is nothing within the narrow compass of human knowledge more interesting than the subject of your letter. If the idea of a government in one centre seems to be everywhere "exploded," perhaps something remains undefined, as dangerous, as plausible, and pernicious as that idea. Half a million of people in England have petitioned Parliament for annual parliaments and universal suffrage. Parliament is unanimous against them. What is this state of things short of a declaration of war between the government and people? And is not this the picture of all Europe? Sovereigns, who modestly call themselves legitimate, are conspiring, in holy and unhallowed leagues, against the progress of human knowledge and human liberty.

War seems on the point of breaking out between government and people. Were the latter united, the question would be soon decided; but they are everywhere divided into innumerable sects, whereas the former are united, and have all the artillery and bayonets in their hands; and what is most melancholy of all, an appeal to arms almost always results in an exchange of one military tyranny for another.

The questions concerning universal suffrage, and those concerning the necessary limitations of the power of suffrage, are among the most difficult. It is hard to say that every man has not an equal right; but, admit this equal right and equal

power, and an immediate revolution would ensue. In all the nations of Europe, the number of persons, who have not a penny, is double those who have a groat; admit all these to an equality of power, and you would soon see how the groats would be divided. Yet, in a few days, the party of the pennies and the party of the groats would be found to exist again, and a new revolution and a new division must ensue.

If there is anywhere an exception from this reasoning, it is in America; nevertheless, there is in these United States a majority of persons, who have no property, over those who have any. I know of nothing more desirable in society than the abolition of all hereditary distinctions. But is not distinction among voters as arbitrary and aristocratical as hereditary distinctions? You will remember that, between thirty and forty years ago, the Irish patriots asked advice of the Duke of Richmond, Dr. Price, Dr. Jebb, &c. These three great statesmen, divines, and philosophers, solemnly advised a universal suffrage. Tracy, in his review of Montesquieu, adopts this principle in its largest extent. A party among mankind, countenanced, at this day, by such numbers and such names, is not to be despised, neglected, nor easily overborne.

There is nothing more irrational, absurd, or ridiculous in the sight of philosophy than the idea of hereditary kings and nobles; yet all the nations of the earth, civilized, savage, and brutal, have adopted them. Whence this universal and irresistible propensity? How shall it be controlled, restrained, corrected, modified, or managed? A government, a mixed government, may be so organized, I hope, as to preserve the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the people without any hereditary ingredient in its composition. Our nation has attempted it, and, if any people can accomplish it, it must be this; and may God Almighty prosper and bless them!

I have seen the efforts of the people in France, Holland, and England. You have read them in all Europe. We both know the result. What is to come, we know not.

My personal interest in such disquisitions can last but a few hours; but, still, *homo sum*, and *homo* I shall be.

May you live to a greater age than mine, and be able to die with brighter prospects for your species than can fall to the lot of your friend.

TO JOHN M. JACKSON.

Quincy, 30 December, 1817.

In 1774, I became acquainted with McKean, Rodney, and Henry. Those three appeared to me to see more clearly to the end of the business than any others of the whole body. At least, they were more candid and explicit with me than any others. Mr. Henry was in Congress only in 1774, and a small part of 1775. He was called home by his State to take a military command. McKean and Rodney continued members, and, I believe, I never voted in opposition to them in any one instance. When, as it happened, I was appointed to draw the plan of a treaty to be carried to France by Dr. Franklin, and proposed by him, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Lee, to the French court, I carefully avoided every thing that could involve us in any alliance more than a commercial friendship. When this plan was reported to Congress, my own most intimate friends, Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee, differed from me in opinion. They thought there was not sufficient temptation to France to join us. They moved for cessions and concessions, which implied warranties and political alliance that I had studiously avoided. My principle was perpetual peace, after that war should be concluded, with all powers of Europe, and perfect neutrality in all their future wars. This principle I was obliged to support against long arguments and able disputants, and, fortunately, carried every point; and, in every point, McKean and Rodney adhered to me, and supported me with inflexible perseverance. And, for four years, I know not that Mr. McKean ever differed from me in a vote. Mr. McKean, however, was not constantly in Congress. He was soon appointed Attorney-General of Pennsylvania, and, afterwards, Chief Justice; and the duties of those offices, though he was always a member of Congress, often necessarily prevented his attendance in the House. While I was in Europe, nothing passed between Mr. McKean and me, except, now and then, a few lines of introduction for a travelling friend about to cross the Atlantic; and except that my bookseller, by my advice, sent a quantity of those dull volumes, called "A Defence," to Mr. McKean, who committed them to Mr. Dobson for sale.

Mr. McKean often expressed to me his entire approbation of the system, and concurrence in all the sentiments in that work.

When I met Mr. McKean again in person at Philadelphia, which was in 1790, after a separation of eleven years and more, I found him, as well as President Washington and all his family, and all his ministers, both Houses of Congress, the city of Philadelphia, and all mankind, for I know not one exception, glowing with sanguine hopes and confident expectation of a revolution in France that should produce a free, democratical republic, as sister to ours, in the first nation in Europe. I stood alone, would agree with nobody in opinion upon that subject. I could foresee nothing but calamities to France and to the world, and the French constitution of 1789 confirmed all my fears. I saw a disposition everywhere to enter into closer connections with our sister republic, and unite with her in a war against all her enemies. Mr. McKean was arranged with Mr. Mifflin, Mr. Sergeant, Dr. Hutchinson, Mr. Rittenhouse, Mr. Gallatin, Mr. Findlay, Mr. Swanwick, and even my bosom friend, Dr. Rush, in this enthusiasm for the French Revolution, and a closer connection, and an alliance, offensive and defensive, with our young sister democratical republic at the head of all Europe.

This appeared to me not only a total departure from our old system, "Friendship with all nations, but entangling alliances with none," as fully understood and determined by Congress; but a policy which must be ruinous and destructive to our country. From this source arose, I will not say a separation or an alienation between Mr. McKean and me, for we still continued on terms of mutual civility; but a cessation of that intimacy which had formerly subsisted between us. But it was impossible that either of us should ever forget the other.

I wish I could extend this letter; but it is impossible. If I regret the infirmities of age, it is not because they announce the rapid approach of the end of my life, but because they disable me to associate and correspond with my friends according to their wishes and my own. And this must be my apology for the shortness of this letter.

TO WILLIAM WIRT.

Quincy, 5 January, 1818.

Your sketches of the life of Mr. Henry have given me a rich entertainment. I will not compare them to the Sybil conducting Æneas to see the ghosts of departed sages and heroes in the region below, but to an angel conveying me to the abodes of the blessed on high, to converse with the spirits of just men made perfect. The names of Henry, Lee, Bland, Pendleton, Washington, Rutledge, Dickinson, Wythe, and many others, will ever thrill through my veins with an agreeable sensation. I am not about to make any critical remarks upon your work, at present. But, Sir,

Erant heroes ante Agamemnona multi.

Or, not to garble Horace,

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illacrimabiles
Urguentur, ignotique longâ
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

If I could go back to the age of thirty-five, Mr. Wirt, I would endeavor to become your rival; not in elegance of composition, but in a simple narration of facts, supported by records, histories, and testimonies, of irrefragable authority. I would adopt, in all its modesty, your title, "Sketches of the Life and Writings of James Otis, of Boston," and, in imitation of your example, I would introduce portraits of a long catalogue of illustrious men, who were agents in the Revolution, in favor of it or against it.

Jeremiah Gridley, the father of the Bar in Boston, and the preceptor of Pratt, Otis, Thacher, Cushing, and many others; Benjamin Pratt, Chief Justice of New York; Colonel John Tyng, James Otis, of Boston, the hero of the biography; Oxenbridge Thacher, Jonathan Sewall, Attorney-General and Judge of Admiralty; Samuel Quincy, Solicitor-General; Daniel Leonard, now Chief Justice of Bermuda; Josiah Quincy, the Boston Cicero; Richard Dana, and Francis Dana, his son, first minister to Russia, and afterwards Chief Justice; Jonathan Mayhew, D. D., Samuel Cooper, D. D., Charles Chauncy, D. D.,

James Warren and his wife; Joseph Warren, of Bunker's Hill; John Winthrop, Professor at Harvard College, and a member of council; Samuel Dexter, the father; John Worthington, of Springfield; Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, and James Lovell, of Boston; Governors Shirley, Pownall, Bernard, Hutchinson, Hancock, Bowdoin, Adams, Sullivan, and Gerry; Lieutenant-Governor Oliver, Chief Justice Oliver, Judge Edmund Trowbridge, Judge William Cushing, and Timothy Ruggles, ought not to be omitted. The military characters, Ward, Lincoln, Warren, Knox, Brooks, Heath, &c., must come in, of course. Nor should Benjamin Kent, Samuel Swift, or John Read, be forgotten.

I envy none of the well-merited glories of Virginia, or any of her sages or heroes. But, Sir, I am jealous, very jealous, of the honor of Massachusetts.

The resistance to the British system for subjugating the colonies, began in 1760, and in the month of February, 1761, James Otis electrified the town of Boston, the province of Massachusetts Bay, and the whole continent, more than Patrick Henry ever did in the whole course of his life. If we must have panegyric and hyperbole, I must say, that if Mr. Henry was Demosthenes and Mr. Richard Henry Lee, Cicero, James Otis was Isaiah and Ezekiel united.

I hope, Sir, that some young gentleman of the ancient and honorable family of the "Searches," will hereafter do impartial justice both to Virginia and Massachusetts.

After all this freedom, I assure you, Sir, it is no flattery, when I congratulate the nation on the acquisition of an Attorney-General of such talents and industry as your "Sketches" demonstrate.

TO JOHN JAY.

Quincy, 9 January, 1818.

"Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry," by William Wirt, of Richmond, Virginia, has been sent to me by Mr. Shaw, of the Athenæum. My family are reading it to me, every evening, and though we have not finished it, we have

proceeded far enough to excite an earnest desire to know your opinion about it.

There is, in section fourth, page 108, a passage which no man now living but yourself can explain. I hope you have read the volume; but as it is possible you may not have seen it, the paragraph is this.

"A petition to the king, an address to the people of Great Britain, and a memorial to the people of British America, were agreed to be drawn. Mr. Lee, Mr. Henry, and others were appointed for the first; Mr. Lee, Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Jay for the two last. The splendor of their *début* occasioned Mr. Henry to be designated by his committee to draw the petition to the king, with which they were charged; and Mr. Lee was charged with the address to the people of England. The last was first reported. On reading it, great disappointment was expressed in every countenance, and a dead silence ensued for some minutes. At length it was laid on the table for perusal and consideration till the next day; when first one member, and then another, arose, and, paying some faint compliment to the composition, observed, that there were still certain considerations not expressed, which should properly find a place in it. The address was, therefore, committed for amendment; and one prepared by Mr. Jay, and offered by Governor Livingston, was reported and adopted, with scarcely an alteration. These facts are stated by a gentleman, to whom they were communicated by Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Harrison, of the Virginia delegation (except that Mr. Harrison erroneously ascribed the draught to Governor Livingston), and to whom they were afterwards confirmed by Governor Livingston himself. Mr. Henry's draught of a petition to the king was equally unsuccessful, and was recommitted for amendment. Mr. John Dickinson (the author of the Farmer's Letters) was added to the committee, and a new draught, prepared by him, was adopted."

This passage is not so luminous as many parts of the book; but, as I understand it, I think it is not correct. There is no man now living who is able perfectly to correct it but yourself, and, in my opinion, it is your conscientious duty to do it.

The question, who was the draughtsman of the address to the people of England, however unimportant to the public it may appear at this day, certainly excited a sensation, a fer-

mentation, and a schism in Congress, at the time, and serious consequences afterwards, which have lasted to this hour, and are not yet spent. I fear, but I do not know, that this animosity was occasioned by indiscretions of R. H. Lee, Mr. Samuel Adams, and some others of the Virginia delegates, by whom Adams was led into error. I never had a doubt that you were the author of that manly and noble address. But, as the subject is now brought before the public by Mr. Wirt, and will excite speculation, you, who alone are capable of it, ought to explain it, and, as I know you will, if at all, without favor or affection.[1]

TO H. NILES.

Quincy, 14 January, 1818.

In a former letter I hazarded an opinion, that the true history of the American Revolution could not be recovered. I had many reasons for that apprehension, one of which I will attempt to explain.

Of the determination of the British cabinet to assert and maintain the sovereign authority of Parliament over the Colonies, in all cases of taxation and internal policy, the first demonstration which arrived in America was an *order in council* to the officers of the customs in Massachusetts Bay, to carry into execution *the acts of trade*, and to apply to the Supreme Judicature of the province for *writs of assistance*, to authorize them to break and enter all houses, cellars, stores, shops, ships, bales, casks, &c., to search and seize all goods, wares, and merchandises, on which the taxes imposed by those acts had not been paid.

Mr. Cockle, of Salem, a deputy under Mr. Paxton, of Boston, the collector of the customs, petitioned the Superior Court in Salem, in November, 1760, for such a writ. The Court doubted its constitutionality, and consequently its legality; but as the king's order ought to be considered, they ordered the question

[1] Mr. Jay's clear and convincing reply, which set the question at rest forever, is printed in his Life by his son, William Jay, vol. ii. p. 381.

to be argued before them, by counsel, at the next February term in Boston.

The community was greatly alarmed. The merchants of Salem and of Boston applied to Mr. Otis to defend them and their country against that formidable instrument of arbitrary power. They tendered him rich fees; he engaged in their cause, but would accept no fees.

James Otis, of Boston, sprang from families among the earliest of the planters of the Colonies, and the most respectable in rank, while the word *rank*, and the idea annexed to it, were tolerated in America. He was a gentleman of general science and extensive literature. He had been an indefatigable student during the whole course of his education in college and at the bar. He was well versed in Greek and Roman history, philosophy, oratory, poetry, and mythology. His classical studies had been unusually ardent, and his acquisitions uncommonly great. He had composed a treatise on Latin prosody, which he lent to me, and I urged him to print. He consented. It is extant, and may speak for itself. It has been lately reviewed in the Anthology by one of our best scholars, at a mature age, and in a respectable station. He had also composed, with equal skill and great labor, a treatise on Greek prosody. This he also lent me, and, by his indulgence, I had it in my possession six months. When I returned it, I begged him to print it. He said there were no Greek types in the country, or, if there were, there was no printer who knew how to use them. He was a passionate admirer of the Greek poets, especially of Homer; and he said it was in vain to attempt to read the poets in any language, without being master of their prosody. This classic scholar was also a great master of the laws of nature and nations. He had read Pufendorf, Grotius, Barbeyrac, Burlamaqui, Vattel, Heineccius; and, in the civil law, Domat, Justinian, and, upon occasions, consulted the *Corpus Juris* at large. It was a maxim which he inculcated on his pupils, as his patron in profession, Mr. Gridley, had done before him, "*that a lawyer ought never to be without a volume of natural or public law, or moral philosophy, on his table or in his pocket.*" In the history, the common law, and statute laws of England, he had no superior, at least in Boston.

Thus qualified to resist the system of usurpation and despot-

ism, meditated by the British ministry, under the auspices of the Earl of Bute, Mr. Otis resigned his commission from the crown, as Advocate-General, an office very lucrative at that time, and a sure road to the highest favors of government in America, and engaged in the cause of his country without fee or reward. His argument, speech, discourse, oration, harangue — call it by which name you will, was the most impressive upon his crowded audience of any that I ever heard before or since, excepting only many speeches by himself in Faneuil Hall and in the House of Representatives, which he made from time to time for ten years afterwards. There were no stenographers in those days. Speeches were not printed; and all that was not remembered, like the harangues of Indian orators, was lost in air. Who, at the distance of fifty-seven years, would attempt, upon memory, to give even a sketch of it? Some of the heads are remembered, out of which Livy or Sallust would not scruple to compose an oration for history. I shall not essay an analysis or a sketch of it at present. I shall only say, and I do say in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis's oration against *writs of assistance* breathed into this nation the breath of life.

Although Mr. Otis had never before interfered in public affairs, his exertions, on this single occasion, secured him a commanding popularity with the friends of their country, and the terror and vengeance of her enemies, neither of which ever deserted him.

At the next election, in May, 1761, he was elected, by a vast majority, a representative in the legislature, of the town of Boston, and continued to be so elected annually for nine years. Here, at the head of the country interest, he conducted her cause with a fortitude, prudence, ability, and perseverance, which has never been exceeded in America, at every sacrifice of health, pleasure, profit, and reputation, and against all the powers of government, and all the talents, learning, wit, scurrility, and insolence of its prostitutes.

Hampden was shot in open field of battle. Otis was basely assassinated in a coffee-house, in the night, by a well-dressed banditti, with a commissioner of the customs at their head.

During the period of nine years, that Mr. Otis was at the head of the cause of his country, he held correspondence with gentlemen, in England, Scotland, and various colonies in Ame-

rica. He must have written and received many letters, collected many pamphlets, and, probably, composed manuscripts, which might have illustrated the rising dawn of the revolution.

After my return from Europe, I asked his daughter whether she had found among her father's manuscripts a treatise on Greek prosody. With hands and eyes uplifted, in a paroxysm of grief, she cried, "Oh! Sir, I have not a line from my father's pen. I have not even his name in his own handwriting." When she was a little calmed, I asked her, "Who has his papers? Where are they?" She answered, "They are no more. In one of those unhappy dispositions of mind, which distressed him after his great misfortune, and a little before his death, he collected all his papers and pamphlets, and committed them to the flames. He was several days employed in it."

TO WILLIAM WIRT.

Quincy, 23 January, 1818.

I thank you for your kind letter of the 12th of this month. As I esteem the character of Mr. Henry an honor to our country, and your volume a masterly delineation of it, I gave orders to purchase it as soon as I heard of it, but was told it was not to be had in Boston. I have seen it only by great favor on a short loan. A copy from the author would be worth many by purchase. It may be sent to me by the mail.

From a personal acquaintance, perhaps I might say a friendship, with Mr. Henry of more than forty years, and from all that I have heard or read of him, I have always considered him as a gentleman of deep reflection, keen sagacity, clear foresight, daring enterprise, inflexible intrepidity, and untainted integrity; with an ardent zeal for the liberties, the honor, and felicity of his country, and his species. All this you justly, as I believe, represent him to have been. There are, however, remarks to be made upon your work, which, if I had the eyes and hands, I would, in the spirit of friendship, attempt. But my hands and eyes and life are but for a moment.

When Congress had finished their business, as they thought,

in the autumn of 1774, I had, with Mr. Henry, before we took leave of each other, some familiar conversation, in which I expressed a full conviction, that our resolves, declarations of rights, enumeration of wrongs, petitions, remonstrances, and addresses, associations, and non-importation agreements, however they might be expected by the people in America, and however necessary to cement the union of the Colonies, would be but waste paper in England. Mr. Henry said, they might make some impression among the people of England, but agreed with me that they would be totally lost upon the government. I had but just received a short and hasty letter, written to me by Major Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, containing "a few broken hints," as he called them, of what he thought was proper to be done, and concluding with these words, "*after all, we must fight.*"[1] This letter I read to Mr. Henry, who listened with great attention; and as soon as I had pronounced the words, "after all, we must fight," he raised his head, and with an energy and vehemence, that I can never forget, broke out with "By G—d, I am of that man's mind." I put the letter into his hand, and, when he had read it, he returned it to me with an equally solemn asseveration, that he agreed entirely in opinion with the writer. I considered this as a sacred oath, upon a very great occasion, and could have sworn it as religiously as he did, and by no means inconsistent with what you say, in some part of your book, that he never took the sacred name in vain.

As I knew the sentiments with which Mr. Henry left Congress, in the autumn of 1774, and knew the chapter and verse from which he had borrowed the sublime expression, "we must fight," I was not at all surprised at your history, in the 122d page, in the note, and in some of the preceding and following pages. Mr. Henry only pursued, in March, 1775, the views and vows of November, 1774.

The other delegates from Virginia returned to their State, in full confidence that all our grievances would be redressed. The last words that Mr. Richard Henry Lee said to me, when we parted, were, "*We shall infallibly carry all our points. You will be completely relieved; all the offensive acts will be repealed;*

[1] This letter is printed in full in the Appendix to vol. ix. of this work.

the army and fleet will be recalled, and Britain will give up her foolish project."

Washington only was in doubt. He never spoke in public. In private he joined with those who advocated a non-exportation, as well as a non-importation agreement. With both, he thought we should prevail; without either, he thought it doubtful. Henry was clear in one opinion, Richard Henry Lee in an opposite opinion, and Washington doubted between the two. Henry, however, appeared in the end to be exactly in the right.

Oratory, Mr. Wirt, as it consists in expressions of the countenance, graces of attitude and motion, and intonation of voice, although it is altogether superficial and ornamental, will always command admiration; yet it deserves little veneration. Flashes of wit, corruscations of imagination, and gay pictures, what are they? Strict truth, rapid reason, and pure integrity are the only essential ingredients in sound oratory. I flatter myself that Demosthenes, by his "action! action! action!" meant to express the same opinion. To speak of American oratory, ancient or modern, would lead me too far, and beyond my depth.

I must conclude with fresh assurances of the high esteem of your humble servant.

TO BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE.

Quincy, 30 January, 1818.

As "the accurate Jefferson" has made the Revolution a game of billiards, I will make it a game of shuttle-cock. Henry might give the first impulse to the ball in Virginia, but Otis's battledore had struck the shuttle-cock up in air in Massachusetts, and continued to keep it up for several years before Henry's ball was touched. Jefferson was but a boy at college, of fifteen or sixteen years of age at most, and too intent on his classics and sciences to know, think, or care about any thing in Boston. When Otis first fulminated against British usurpation, I was but twenty-five years and three months old. Jefferson is, at least, nine, I believe ten years younger than I, and, consequently, could not be more than fifteen or sixteen. He knew

more of the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites than he did of what was passing in Boston.

You presume that I "am certain as to the date." You need not take my word. Look into Judge Minot's History of Massachusetts Bay, *anno* 1761; search the records of the Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize and General Gaol Delivery, at Salem term, 1760, and Boston term, 1761; look up the newspapers of 1761; ascertain the time when Chief Justice Stephen Sewall died; call for Dr. Mayhew's printed sermon on his death; search the date of Chief Justice Thomas Hutchinson's commission as Chief Justice; ascertain the time when the bench and the bar assumed their scarlet and sable robes, and you will not find much reason to call in question my veracity or memory. If ever human beings had a right to say,

> "Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores;
> Sic vos, non vobis, mellificatis apes,"

they were James Otis and Samuel Adams; and to them ought statues to be erected, and not to

JOHN.

TO BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE.

Quincy, 6 February, 1818.

WATERHOUSE, — You ought to tell me the name of that animal who "faced you down" against dates and Otis; he must have been an inveterate, indurated *old tory*, with an iron heart, and a brazen face, or, at least, a son or grandson of such a one, who has inherited all his ancestor's envy, malice, hatred, mortified pride, and demoniacal revenge.

"James Otis had no patriotism!!!" Had the adored Hutchinson patriotism, when he mounted to the head of the supreme judicature, on purpose to sanctify the most odious chain that ever was forged to fetter the hands and feet of a free people, as the writs of assistance would have been, in the hands of an executive power and a supreme, sovereign, unlimited, uncontrollable legislative authority, three thousand miles distant?

Had any of his idolaters patriotism, when they excited a bloody war of eight years against their country, to enslave it to a foreign sovereignty?

Would Mr. Otis, because his father had been disappointed of an office, which had been promised him by two successive governors, worth one hundred and twenty pounds sterling, at most, have resigned an office, which he held himself, worth two or three hundred pounds sterling, at least? If he had no patriotic feelings, his filial affection must have been very strong!

It has been, in all times, the artifice of despotism and superstition to nip liberty, truth, virtue, and religion, in the bud, by cutting off the heads of all who dared to show a regard to either. But when a process so summary could not be effected, the next trick was to blast the character of every rising genius, who excited their jealousy, by propagating lies and slanders to destroy his influence.

Jews and Pagans imputed the conversion of St. Paul to disappointment in love. They said that he courted the daughter of his master, Gamaliel, but the learned Pharisee thought him too mean in person and fortune for a match with the beautiful and accomplished young lady, and forbade his addresses. Revenge for this affront excited a mortal hatred against all Pharisees, and Paul became an apostate from Judaism, and a convert to Christianity, from spite. And this calumny has lasted more than seventeen hundred years; and, I hope, the defamation of Otis will last as long, because it will be an immortal proof of the malice and revenge of the scurrilous, persecuting tyrants, against whom he had to contend.

The Romans, and all of their communion, say that "the Reformation owed its origin, in Germany, to interest, in England, to love, and in France, to novelty; that all the kings and princes who favored it, were seduced by the temptation of the confiscation of lands, and gold, and diamonds of the churches, monasteries, and convents."

Is Christianity the less divine, is the Reformation less glorious, is the American Revolution less beneficial, for these envenomed slanders?

I must know who that ugly fellow is, whom you quote with so little disapprobation. Do you not abhor him? If you had loved James Otis in your youth, as much as I did in mine, and

if you had smarted as often as I have, under the hornet stings, the *chew*-balls, the serpent's teeth, and the poisoned arrows of these old tories, you would hate him with a perfect hatred.

TO H. NILES.

Quincy, 13 February, 1818.

The American Revolution was not a common event. Its effects and consequences have already been awful over a great part of the globe. And when and where are they to cease?

But what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American war? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations. While the king, and all in authority under him, were believed to govern in justice and mercy, according to the laws and constitution derived to them from the God of nature and transmitted to them by their ancestors, they thought themselves bound to pray for the king and queen and all the royal family, and all in authority under them, as ministers ordained of God for their good; but when they saw those powers renouncing all the principles of authority, and bent upon the destruction of all the securities of their lives, liberties, and properties, they thought it their duty to pray for the continental congress and all the thirteen State congresses, &c.

There might be, and there were others who thought less about religion and conscience, but had certain habitual sentiments of allegiance and loyalty derived from their education; but believing allegiance and protection to be reciprocal, when protection was withdrawn, they thought allegiance was dissolved.

Another alteration was common to all. The people of America had been educated in an habitual affection for England, as their mother country; and while they thought her a kind and tender parent, (erroneously enough, however, for she never was such a mother,) no affection could be more sincere. But when

they found her a cruel beldam, willing like Lady Macbeth, to "dash their brains out," it is no wonder if their filial affections ceased, and were changed into indignation and horror.

This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.

By what means this great and important alteration in the religious, moral, political, and social character of the people of thirteen colonies, all distinct, unconnected, and independent of each other, was begun, pursued, and accomplished, it is surely interesting to humanity to investigate, and perpetuate to posterity.

To this end, it is greatly to be desired, that young men of letters in all the States, especially in the thirteen original States, would undertake the laborious, but certainly interesting and amusing task, of searching and collecting all the records, pamphlets, newspapers, and even handbills, which in any way contributed to change the temper and views of the people, and compose them into an independent nation.

The colonies had grown up under constitutions of government so different, there was so great a variety of religions, they were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance, and their intercourse had been so rare, and their knowledge of each other so imperfect, that to unite them in the same principles in theory and the same system of action, was certainly a very difficult enterprise. The complete accomplishment of it, in so short a time and by such simple means, was perhaps a singular example in the history of mankind. Thirteen clocks were made to strike together — a perfection of mechanism, which no artist had ever before effected.

In this research, the gloriole of individual gentlemen, and of separate States, is of little consequence. The *means and the measures* are the proper objects of investigation. These may be of use to posterity, not only in this nation, but in South America and all other countries. They may teach mankind that revolutions are no trifles; that they ought never to be undertaken rashly; nor without deliberate consideration and sober reflection; nor without a solid, immutable, eternal foundation of justice and humanity; nor without a people possessed of intelligence, fortitude, and integrity sufficient to carry them

with steadiness, patience, and perseverance, through all the vicissitudes of fortune, the fiery trials and melancholy disasters they may have to encounter.

The town of Boston early instituted an annual oration on the 4th of July, in commemoration of the principles and feelings which contributed to produce the revolution. Many of those orations I have heard, and all that I could obtain, I have read. Much ingenuity and eloquence appears upon every subject, except those principles and feelings. That of my honest and amiable neighbor, Josiah Quincy, appeared to me the most directly to the purpose of the institution. Those principles and feelings ought to be traced back for two hundred years, and sought in the history of the country from the first plantations in America. Nor should the principles and feelings of the English and Scotch towards the colonies, through that whole period, ever be forgotten. The perpetual discordance between British principles and feelings and of those of America, the next year after the suppression of the French power in America, came to a crisis, and produced an explosion.

It was not until after the annihilation of the French dominion in America that any British ministry had dared to gratify their own wishes, and the desire of the nation, by projecting a formal plan for raising a national revenue from America, by parliamentary taxation. The first great manifestation of this design was by the order to carry into strict executions those acts of parliament, which were well known by the appellation of the *acts of trade*, which had lain a dead letter, unexecuted for half a century, and some of them, I believe, for nearly a whole one.

This produced, in 1760 and 1761, an awakening and a revival of American principles and feelings, with an enthusiasm which went on increasing till, in 1775, it burst out in open violence, hostility, and fury.

The characters the most conspicuous, the most ardent and influential in this revival, from 1760 to 1766, were, first and foremost, before all and above all, James Otis; next to him was Oxenbridge Thacher; next to him, Samuel Adams; next to him, John Hancock; then Dr. Mayhew; then Dr. Cooper and his brother. Of Mr. Hancock's life, character, generous nature, great and disinterested sacrifices, and important services, if I

had forces, I should be glad to write a volume. But this, I hope, will be done by some younger and abler hand. Mr. Thacher, because his name and merits are less known, must not be wholly omitted. This gentleman was an eminent barrister at law, in as large practice as any one in Boston. There was not a citizen of that town more universally beloved for his learning, ingenuity, every domestic and social virtue, and conscientious conduct in every relation of life. His patriotism was as ardent as his progenitors had been ancient and illustrious in this country. Hutchinson often said, "Thacher was not born a plebeian, but he was determined to die one." In May, 1763, I believe, he was chosen by the town of Boston one of their representatives in the legislature, a colleague with Mr. Otis, who had been a member from May, 1761, and he continued to be reëlected annually till his death in 1765, when Mr. Samuel Adams was elected to fill his place, in the absence of Mr. Otis, then attending the Congress at New York. Thacher had long been jealous of the unbounded ambition of Mr. Hutchinson, but when he found him not content with the office of Lieutenant-Governor, the command of the castle and its emoluments, of Judge of Probate for the county of Suffolk, a seat in his Majesty's Council in the Legislature, his brother-in-law Secretary of State by the king's commission, a brother of that Secretary of State, a Judge of the Supreme Court and a member of Council, now in 1760 and 1761, soliciting and accepting the office of Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, he concluded, as Mr. Otis did, and as every other enlightened friend of his country did, that he sought that office with the determined purpose of determining all causes in favor of the ministry at St. James's, and their servile parliament.

His indignation against him henceforward, to 1765, when he died, knew no bounds but truth. I speak from personal knowledge. For, from 1758 to 1765, I attended every superior and inferior court in Boston, and recollect not one, in which he did not invite me home to spend evenings with him, when he made me converse with him as well as I could, on all subjects of religion, morals, law, politics, history, philosophy, belles lettres, theology, mythology, cosmogony, metaphysics, — Locke, Clark, Leibnitz, Bolingbroke, Berkeley, — the preëstablished harmony of the universe, the nature of matter and of spirit, and the

eternal establishment of coincidences between their operations; fate, foreknowledge absolute; and we reasoned on such unfathomable subjects as high as Milton's gentry in pandemonium; and we understood them as well as they did, and no better. To such mighty mysteries he added the news of the day, and the tittle-tattle of the town. But his favorite subject was politics, and the impending, threatening system of parliamentary taxation and universal government over the colonies. On this subject he was so anxious and agitated that I have no doubt it occasioned his premature death. From the time when he argued the question of writs of assistance to his death, he considered the king, ministry, parliament, and nation of Great Britain as determined to new-model the colonies from the foundation, to annul all their charters, to constitute them all royal governments, to raise a revenue in America by parliamentary taxation, to apply that revenue to pay the salaries of governors, judges, and all other crown officers; and, after all this, to raise as large a revenue as they pleased, to be applied to national purposes at the exchequer in England; and further, to establish bishops and the whole system of the Church of England, tithes and all, throughout all British America. This system, he said, if it was suffered to prevail, would extinguish the flame of liberty all over the world; that America would be employed as an engine to batter down all the miserable remains of liberty in Great Britain and Ireland, where only any semblance of it was left in the world. To this system he considered Hutchinson, the Olivers, and all their connections, dependents, adherents, shoelickers, &c., entirely devoted. He asserted that they were all engaged with all the crown officers in America and the understrappers of the ministry in England, in a deep and treasonable conspiracy to betray the liberties of their country, for their own private, personal, and family aggrandizement. His philippics against the unprincipled ambition and avarice of all of them, but especially of Hutchinson, were unbridled; not only in private, confidential conversations, but in all companies and on all occasions. He gave Hutchinson the sobriquet of "Summa Potestatis," and rarely mentioned him but by the name of "Summa." His liberties of speech were no secrets to his enemies. I have sometimes wondered that they did not throw him over the bar, as they did soon afterwards Major

Hawley. For they hated him worse than they did James Otis or Samuel Adams, and they feared him more, because they had no revenge for a father's disappointment of a seat on the superior bench to impute to him, as they did to Otis; and Thacher's character through life had been so modest, decent, unassuming; his morals so pure, and his religion so venerated, that they dared not attack him. In his office were educated to the bar two eminent characters, the late Judge Lowell and Josiah Quincy, aptly called the Boston Cicero. Mr. Thacher's frame was slender, his constitution delicate; whether his physicians overstrained his vessels with mercury, when he had the smallpox by inoculation at the castle, or whether he was overplied by public anxieties and exertions, the smallpox left him in a decline from which he never recovered. Not long before his death he sent for me to commit to my care some of his business at the bar. I asked him whether he had seen the Virginia resolves: "Oh yes — they are men! they are noble spirits! It kills me to think of the lethargy and stupidity that prevails here. I long to be out. I will go out. I will go out. I will go into court, and make a speech, which shall be read after my death, as my dying testimony against this infernal tyranny which they are bringing upon us." Seeing the violent agitation into which it threw him, I changed the subject as soon as possible, and retired. He had been confined for some time. Had he been abroad among the people, he would not have complained so pathetically of the "lethargy and stupidity that prevailed;" for town and country were all alive, and in August became active enough; and some of the people proceeded to unwarrantable excesses, which were more lamented by the patriots than by their enemies. Mr. Thacher soon died, deeply lamented by all the friends of their country.

Another gentleman, who had great influence in the commencement of the Revolution, was Doctor Jonathan Mayhew, a descendant of the ancient governor of Martha's Vineyard. This divine had raised a great reputation both in Europe and America, by the publication of a volume of seven sermons in the reign of King George the Second, 1749, and by many other writings, particularly a sermon in 1750, on the 30th of January, on the subject of passive obedience and non-resistance, in which the saintship and martyrdom of King Charles the First are con-

sidered, seasoned with wit and satire superior to any in Swift or Franklin. It was read by everybody; celebrated by friends, and abused by enemies. During the reigns of King George the First and King George the Second, the reigns of the Stuarts, the two Jameses and the two Charleses were in general disgrace in England. In America they had always been held in abhorrence. The persecutions and cruelties suffered by their ancestors under those reigns, had been transmitted by history and tradition, and Mayhew seemed to be raised up to revive all their animosities against tyranny, in church and state, and at the same time to destroy their bigotry, fanaticism, and inconsistency. David Hume's plausible, elegant, fascinating, and fallacious apology, in which he varnished over the crimes of the Stuarts, had not then appeared. To draw the character of Mayhew, would be to transcribe a dozen volumes. This transcendent genius threw all the weight of his great fame into the scale of his country in 1761, and maintained it there with zeal and ardor till his death, in 1766. In 1763 appeared the controversy between him and Mr. Apthorp, Mr. Caner, Dr. Johnson, and Archbishop Secker, on the charter and conduct of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. To form a judgment of this debate, I beg leave to refer to a review of the whole, printed at the time and written by Samuel Adams, though by some, very absurdly and erroneously, ascribed to Mr. Apthorp. If I am not mistaken, it will be found a model of candor, sagacity, impartiality, and close, correct reasoning.

If any gentleman supposes this controversy to be nothing to the present purpose, he is grossly mistaken. It spread an universal alarm against the authority of Parliament. It excited a general and just apprehension, that bishops, and dioceses, and churches, and priests, and tithes, were to be imposed on us by Parliament. It was known that neither king, nor ministry, nor archbishops, could appoint bishops in America, without an act of Parliament; and if Parliament could tax us, they could establish the Church of England, with all its creeds, articles, tests, ceremonies, and tithes, and prohibit all other churches, as conventicles and schism shops.

Nor must Mr. Cushing be forgotten. His good sense and sound judgment, the urbanity of his manners, his universal good character, his numerous friends and connections, and his

continual intercourse with all sorts of people, added to his constant attachment to the liberties of his country, gave him a great and salutary influence from the beginning in 1760.

Let me recommend these hints to the consideration of Mr. Wirt, whose Life of Mr. Henry I have read with great delight. I think that, after mature investigation, he will be convinced that Mr. Henry did not "give the first impulse to the ball of independence," and that Otis, Thacher, Samuel Adams, Mayhew, Hancock, Cushing, and thousands of others, were laboring for several years at the wheel before the name of Henry was heard beyond the limits of Virginia.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 25 February, 1818.

As Mr. Wirt has filled my head with James Otis, and as I am well informed, that the honorable Mr. Benjamin Austin, alias Honestus, alias Old South,[1] &c., roundly asserts, that Mr. Otis had no patriotism, and that "he acted only from revenge of his father's disappointment of a seat on the Superior Bench," I will tell you a story which may make you laugh, if it should not happen to melt you into tears.

Otis belonged to a club, who met on evenings, of which club William Molineux, whose character you know very well, was a member. Molineux had a petition before the legislature, which did not succeed to his wishes, and he became, for several evenings, sour, and wearied the company with his complaints of services, losses, sacrifices, &c., and said, "That a man who has behaved as I have, should be treated as I am, is intolerable," &c. Otis had said nothing, but the company were disgusted and out of patience, when Otis rose from his seat, and said, "Come, come, Will, quit this subject, and let us enjoy ourselves. I

[1] Benjamin Austin was a voluminous writer under these signatures, in the Boston Chronicle, in the early part of the present century, and an active leader of the republican side in politics. He was known during the rest of his life as Honestus, or rather Hony Austin.

also have a list of grievances; will you hear it?" The club expected some fun, and all cried out, "Aye! aye! let us hear your list."

"Well, then, Will; in the first place I resigned the office of Advocate-General, which I held from the crown, which produced me — how much do you think?" "A great deal, no doubt," said Molineux. "Shall we say two hundred sterling a year?" "Aye, more, I believe," said Molineux. "Well, let it be two hundred; that for ten years is two thousand. In the next place, I have been obliged to relinquish the greatest part of my business at the bar. Will you set that at two hundred more?" "Oh! I believe it much more than that." "Well, let it be two hundred. This, for ten years, makes two thousand. You allow, then, I have lost four thousand pounds sterling." "Aye, and more too," said Molineux.

"In the next place, I have lost a hundred friends, among whom were the men of the first rank, fortune, and power in the province. At what price will you estimate them?" "Damn them," said Molineux, "at nothing. You are better without them than with them." A loud laugh. "Be it so," said Otis.

"In the next place, I have made a thousand enemies, amongst whom are the government of the province and the nation. What do you think of this item?" "That is as it may happen," said Molineux.

"In the next place, you know I love pleasure. But I have renounced all amusement for ten years. What is that worth to a man of pleasure?" "No great matter," said Molineux, "you have made politics your amusement." A hearty laugh.

"In the next place, I have ruined as fine health and as good a constitution of body as nature ever gave to man." "That is melancholy indeed," said Molineux. "There is nothing to be said upon that point."

"Once more," said Otis, holding his head down before Molineux, "Look upon this head!" (where was a scar in which a man might bury his finger.) "What do you think of this? And what is worse, my friends think I have a monstrous crack in my skull." This made all the company very grave, and look very solemn. But Otis, setting up a laugh, and with a gay countenance, said to Molineux, "Now, Willy, my advice to you is, to say no more about your grievances; for you and

I had better put up our accounts of profit and loss in our pockets, and say no more about them, lest the world should laugh at us."

This whimsical dialogue put all the company, and Molineux himself, into good humor, and they passed the rest of the evening in joyous conviviality.

It is provoking, it is astonishing, and it is mortifying, and it is humiliating, to see how calumny sticks, and is transmitted from age to age. Mr. Austin is one of the last men I should have expected to have swallowed that execrable lie, that Otis had no patriotism. The father was refused an office worth twelve hundred pounds old tenor, or about one hundred and twenty pounds sterling; and the refusal was no loss, for his practice at the bar was worth much more, for Colonel Otis was a lawyer in profitable practice, and his seat in the legislature gave him more power and more honor; for this refusal the son resigned an office which he held from the crown, worth twice the sum. The son must have been a most dutiful and affectionate child to the father; or rather, the most enthusiastically and frenzically affectionate.

I have been young, and now am old, and I solemnly say, I have never known a man whose love of his country was more ardent or sincere; never one, who suffered so much; never one, whose services for any ten years of his life were so important and essential to the cause of his country, as those of Mr. Otis from 1760 to 1770.

The truth is, he was an honest man, and a thorough taught lawyer. He was called upon in his official capacity as Advocate-General by the custom-house officers, to argue their cause in favor of writs of assistance. These writs he knew to be illegal, unconstitutional, destructive of the liberties of his country, a base instrument of arbitrary power, and intended as an entering wedge to introduce unlimited taxation and legislation by authority of Parliament. He therefore scorned to prostitute his honor and his conscience, by becoming a tool. And he scorned to hold an office which could compel him or tempt him to be one. He therefore resigned it. He foresaw, as every other enlightened man foresaw, a tremendous storm coming upon his country, and determined to run all risks, and share the fate of the ship, after exerting all his energies to save her,

if possible. At the solicitation of Boston and Salem, he accordingly embarked, and accepted the command. To attribute to such a character sinister or trivial motives, is ridiculous.

You and Mr. Wirt have "brought the old man out," and, I fear, he will never be driven in again till he falls into the grave.

TO WILLIAM WIRT.

Quincy, 7 March, 1818.

Be pleased to accept my cordial thanks for the present of an elegant copy of your Sketches of Mr. Henry. I know not whether I shall ever have time to make you any other return than thanks; but, as I see you wish to investigate the sources of the American Revolution, if you will give me leave, I will give you such hints as my memory affords, to assist you.

In 1764 was published, in Boston, a pretty little pamphlet, "The Sentiments of a British American," the motto of which ought to have warned Great Britain to desist from her tyrannical system of taxation.

> Asellum in prato timidus pascebat senex.
> Is, hostium clamore subito territus,
> Suadebat asino fugere, ne possent capi.
> At ille lentus: quæso, num binas mihi
> Clitellas impositurum victorem putas?
> Senex negavit. Ergo quid refert mea
> Cui serviam? clitellas dum portem meas!
>
> *Phædrus.*

Considering "An Act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America," of the 4 G. III., he says; "The first objection is, that a tax is laid on several commodities, to be raised and levied in the plantations, and to be remitted home to England. This is esteemed as a grievance, inasmuch as they are laid without the consent of the representatives of the colonists. It is esteemed an essential British right, that no person shall be subject to any tax, but what, in person or by his representative, he has a voice in laying."

I am indebted to you, Sir, for the reperusal of this pretty little thing. I had never seen it for fifty-four years, and should never have seen it again; but your book has excited me, having no copy of it, to borrow it as a great favor for a short time. It was written by Oxenbridge Thacher, a barrister at law in Boston. There is so much resemblance between this pamphlet and Mr. Jay's address to the people of England, written ten years afterwards, that, as Johnson said of his Rasselas and Voltaire's Candide, one might be suspected to have given birth to the other.

In 1764 was published, in Boston, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved," by James Otis, Esq. This work was read in the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, in manuscript, in 1764, and, though not ordered by them to be published, it was printed with their knowledge. In it these propositions are asserted as fundamental.

"1. That the supreme and subordinate powers of legislation should be free and sacred in the hands where the community have once rightfully placed them.

2. The supreme, national legislative cannot be altered justly till the commonwealth is dissolved, nor a subordinate legislative taken away without forfeiture or other good cause. Nor then can the subjects in the subordinate government be reduced to a state of slavery, and subject to the despotic rule of others.

3. No legislative, supreme or subordinate, has a right to make itself arbitrary.

4. The supreme legislative cannot justly assume a power of ruling by extempore arbitrary decrees, but is bound to dispense justice by known, settled rules, and by duly authorized, independent judges.

5. THE SUPREME POWER *cannot take from any man any part of his property*, WITHOUT HIS CONSENT IN PERSON, OR BY REPRESENTATION.

6. The legislative cannot transfer the power of making laws to any other hands.

These are their bounds which, by God and nature, are fixed; hitherto have they a right to come, and no further.

1. To govern by stated laws.

2. Those laws should have no other end ultimately but the good of the people.

3. TAXES ARE NOT TO BE LAID ON THE PEOPLE, BUT BY THEIR CONSENT IN PERSON, OR BY DEPUTATION.

4. Their whole power is not transferable.

These are the first principles of law and justice, and the great barriers of a free State, and of the British Constitution in particular. I ask, I want no more!"

This work, which in 1764 was as familiar to me as my alphabet, I had not seen for fifty-four years, and should never have seen it again, if your Sketches, for which I again thank you, had not aroused me. With some pains, and as a great favor, I have obtained the loan of it for a short time. In page 73 is an elaborate and learned demonstration, that all acts of Parliament, laying taxes on the Colonies, without their consent, are void.

In an appendix to this work is a copy of instructions, given by the city of Boston at their annual meeting, in May, 1764, to their representatives, Royal Tyler, James Otis, Thomas Cushing, and Oxenbridge Thacher, Esqrs. These instructions were drawn by Samuel Adams, who was one of those appointed by the town for that purpose. These instructions are a sample of that simplicity, purity, and harmony of style, which distinguished all the productions of Mr. Adams's pen. I wish I could transcribe the whole; but the paragraph most directly to the present purpose is the following.

"But what still heightens our apprehensions is, that these unexpected proceedings may be preparatory to new taxations upon us. For, if our trade may be taxed, why not our lands? Why not the produce of our lands, and every thing we possess or make use of? This, we apprehend, annihilates our charter right to govern and tax ourselves. It strikes at our British privileges, which, as we have never forfeited them, we hold in common with our fellow-subjects, who are natives of Britain. If taxes are laid upon us in any shape, without our having a legal representation where they are laid, are we not reduced from the character of free subjects to the miserable state of tributary slaves?"

This whole work was published more than a year before Mr. Henry's resolutions were moved. Excuse the trouble I give you, and believe, &c.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 11 March, 1818.

Your pupil, Mr. Minot, was a young gentleman of excellent character, pure, spotless in morals and manners, loving truth above all things. Agreed. But can you accuse me of prejudice or malignity, when I perceive a tang of the old cask of toryism in his History? He studies, he labors for impartiality; but does he always hit it?

In page 142, of his second volume, he says, "There was a pause in the opposition to the measures of the Crown and Parliament!" "A pause," indeed, there was! A *hiatus valde deflendus!* I never could account for it, and I cannot, to this day, account for it, to my own entire satisfaction. There was an appearance of coalition between Otis and Hutchinson, which had wellnigh destroyed Otis's popularity and influence forever. The rage against him in the town of Boston seemed to be without bounds. He was called a reprobate, an apostate, and a traitor, in every street in Boston. I have heard sober, substantial, independent householders lament, with tears in their eyes, the fall of Otis, and declare that they never had so high an opinion of any man before, and they never would have so much confidence in any man again. The indignation of all his political friends against him was universal. His colleague, Mr. Thacher, was, in private, as explicit as anybody in condemning him. If I may, without or with vanity, mention myself in such company, I must acknowledge that I was staggered and inflamed. I said, "What! is a controversy between two quarters of the globe become a dispute between two petty names of office and seat on the bench of Common Pleas at Barnstable, on the other?"[1] A meeting of the bar was called, upon some critical point connected with politics.[2] Otis did not

[1] The copies made of these late letters are often exceedingly defective. There is obviously an omission of some words in the first part of this sentence, which makes the whole of it unintelligible.

[2] As the dates exactly coincide, it seems not unlikely that this is the same bar-meeting described in the Diary, vol. ii. p. 142. But that was not connected with politics. The indignation excited against Mr. Otis, who was present and opposed the bar rules there agreed upon, may have been much increased by his vacillation in politics. It was violent enough, at all events. Thacher shared in it largely.

appear. Though several messages were sent for him, he would not come. I suspected him of skulking, and was so provoked that I rashly said, and publicly to all the bar, young as I was, "Otis is a mastiff that will bark and roar like a lion one hour, and the next, if a sop is thrown in his way, will creep like a spaniel." *Horresco referens!* I shall never forgive myself for this wild sally. Thacher beckoned me to come to him. He whispered in my ear, "Adams, you are too warm." Happy would it have been for me, if I had always had so faithful a monitor! But I then suspected and believed that Otis was corrupted and bought off, and expected that Otis and Hutchinson would in future go hand in hand, in support of ministerial measures and parliamentary taxation, and that all the ministerial people would, at the next election, use all their influence to secure his reëlection into the legislature. And this was the general opinion. But, when the election drew near, it was found that all this was an artful stratagem to turn Otis out. The old calumnies were revived, that Otis's sole motive had been vengeance for his father's disappointed ambition; and, but a few days before the election, appeared an envenomed song,[1] in which Otis was abused more virulently than the elder Pitt was, on his acceptance of a pension and a peerage. This convinced the people that Otis had not committed the unpardonable sin against them, and he was again elected, though by a small majority. I heard him afterwards, in the House, attempt a vindication of himself, but it was not to my entire satisfaction. He represented the clamor that had been raised against him; said that he had thought himself ruined; but he added, "the song of the drunkard saved me." Samuel Waterhouse, an old scribbler for Hutchinson against Pownall, was supposed to be the author of the song, and Samuel Waterhouse was reported to be intemperate.

Mr. Otis cannot be exculpated from the charge of wavering in his opinions. In his "Rights of the Colonies Asserted and Proved," though a noble monument to his fame, and an important document in the early history of the Revolution, there are, nevertheless, concessions in favor of authority in Parliament inconsistent with the ground he had taken, three years

[1] Jemmybullero.

before, in his argument against the sugar act, the molasses act, and writs of assistance, and with many of his ardent speeches in the legislature, in the year 1761 and 1762. Otis had ploughed, harrowed, and manured a rich, strong soil, and sown the best seeds; but, as the worthy farmers in my neighborhood express themselves, "there was a slack after planting." A light cloud passed over the province, which diminished its lustre; but not over the town of Boston, for that still glowed with light and heat. Who could account for this phenomenon? Otis, the son, had no conceivable object. Colonel Otis, the father, was the undisputed head of the bar in the three counties of Barnstable, Plymouth, and Bristol, besides occasional engagements in other counties. His profits must have been much greater than the pitiful emoluments of the office to which he was appointed. Besides, he was supposed to be rich, and he was rich for those times. Certainly, he was rich in connections, in popularity, in power, and in property.

But the strange, unaccountable election of Hutchinson to the agency was an astonishment and a cruel mortification to all the inflexibles. It was committing the tender kid to the custody and guardianship of the hungry lion. There was little confidence in any of the agents, De Berdt, Mauduit, or Jackson. They could know nothing with certainty of London characters, but it is certain they had better have appointed Will Molineux or Dr. Young than Hutchinson. The legislature was, indeed, to be pitied. They knew not whom to trust.

To account for Hutchinson's election to the agency, look to your pupil's second volume, pages 144, 145, 146, &c.

In page 146, Hutchinson is employed "in draughting instructions to Mr. Mauduit, against the several acts of Parliament so detrimental to the trade and fishery of the province." But your pupil does not inform us who were united with Hutchinson in draughting these instructions. He ought to have given us the instructions, word for word. No historian ought to be trusted in abridging state papers so critical as this. The only construction I can put upon this whole transaction is, and was, that Hutchinson was intriguing with all his subtilty and simulation, to get himself elected agent; that he assumed so much the appearance of an angel of light as to deceive the very elect. There are moments when the firmest minds tremble, and the

clearest understandings are clouded. Who would believe that Catharine de Medici could deceive the Admiral Coligni, the profoundest statesman, the honestest man in Europe, to his own destruction, and that of the Protestant religion in France?

In the Boston Gazette of the 4th of April, 1763, Mr. Otis published a vindication of himself, with his name. Where can you find a more manly morsel? Charles Paxton, the essence of customs, taxation, and revenue, appears to have been Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Secretary, and Chief Justice. A more deliberate, cool, studied, corrupt appointment never was made than that of Hutchinson to be Chief Justice. It was done for the direct purpose of enslaving this whole continent, and, consequently, Britain and man; and, if Otis did say he would set the province in a flame, it was one of the sublimest expressions that ever was uttered, and he ought to have a statue of adamant erected in honor of it. But, I believe, he only said, "Hutchinson's appointment will set the province in a flame." But I care not a farthing for the difference; in either case it was a glorious prophecy, equal to any in Daniel, and as perfectly fulfilled.

It never was pretended that Otis voted for Hutchinson to be agent, and it soon appeared that he was no traitor. He again appeared the life and soul of the Revolution, and continued such to his assassination. Hutchinson was soon excused from his agency.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 5 April, 1818.

In Mr. Wirt's elegant and eloquent panegyric on Mr. Henry, I beg your attention to page 56 along to page 67, the end of the second section, where you will read a curious specimen of the agonies of patriotism in the early stages of the Revolution. "When Mr. Henry could carry his resolutions but by one vote, and that against the influence of Randolph, Bland, Pendleton, Wythe, and all the old members, whose influence in the House had till then been unbroken; and when Peyton Randolph, after-

wards President of Congress, swore a round oath, he would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote; for one vote would have divided the House, and Robinson was in the chair, who he knew would have negatived the resolution."

And you will also see the confused manner in which they were first recorded, and how they have since been garbled in history. My remarks, at present, will be confined to the anecdote in page 65. "'Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third'—'Treason,' cried the speaker,—'Treason, treason,' echoed from every part of the House. Henry finished his sentence by the words, 'may profit by their example.' If this be treason, make the most of it."

In Judge Minot's History of Massachusetts Bay, volume second, in pages 122 and 123, you will find another agony of patriotism. In 1762, three years before Mr. Henry's, Mr. Otis suffered one of equal severity in the House of Representatives of Massachusetts. Judge Minot's account of it is this.

"The remonstrance offered to the Governor was attended with aggravating circumstances. It was passed after a very warm speech by a member in the House; and at first contained the following offensive observation:

'For it would be of little consequence to the people whether they were subject to George or Louis, the King of Great Britain or the French King, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without Parliament.'"

Though Judge Minot does not say it, the warm speech was from the tongue, and the offensive observation from the pen of James Otis. When these words of the remonstrance were first read in the House, Timothy Paine, Esq., a member from Worcester, in his zeal for royalty, though a very worthy and very amiable man, cried out, "Treason! Treason!" The House, however, were not intimidated, but voted the remonstrance, with all the treason contained in it, by a large majority; and it was presented to the Governor by a committee, of which Mr. Otis was a member.

Judge Minot proceeds, "The Governor was so displeased at this passage, that he sent a letter to the speaker, returning the message of the House, in which, he said, the King's name, dignity, and cause were so improperly treated, that he was obliged to desire the speaker to recommend earnestly to the House, that

it might not be entered upon the minutes in the terms in which it then stood. For, if it should, he was satisfied they would again and again wish that some parts of it were expunged; especially if it should appear, as he doubted not it would, when he entered upon his vindication, that there was not the least ground for the insinuation, under color of which that sacred and well-beloved name was so disrespectfully brought into question.

Upon the reading of this letter, the exceptionable clause was struck out of the message."

I have now before me a pamphlet, printed in 1762, by Edes & Gill, in Queen street, Boston, entitled "*A Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, more particularly in the last Session of the General Assembly*, by James Otis, Esq., a member of said House," with this motto: —

> "Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
> Who dare to love their country and be poor;"
> "Or good, tho' rich, humane and wise, tho' great;
> Jove give but these, we 've nought to fear from fate."

I wish I could transcribe the whole of this pamphlet, because it is a document of importance in the early history of the Revolution, which ought never to be forgotten. It shows, in a strong light, the heaves and throes of the burning mountain, three years, at least, before the explosion of the volcano in Massachusetts or Virginia.

Had Judge Minot ever seen this pamphlet, could he have given so superficial an account of this year, 1762? There was more than one "*warm speech*" made in that session of the legislature. Mr. Otis himself made many. A dark cloud hung over the whole continent; but it was peculiarly black and threatening over Massachusetts and the town of Boston, against which devoted city the first thunderbolts of parliamentary omnipotence were intended and expected to be darted. Mr. Otis, from his first appearance in the House in 1761, had shown such a vast superiority of talents, information, and energy to every other member of the House, that in 1762 he took the lead, as it were, of course. He opened the session with a speech, a sketch of which he has given us himself. It depends upon no man's memory. It is warm; it is true. But it is

warm only with loyalty to his king, love to his country, and exultations in her exertions in the national cause.

This pamphlet ought to be reprinted and deposited in the cabinet of the curious. The preface is a frank, candid, and manly page, explaining the motive of the publication, namely, the clamors against the House for their proceedings, in which he truly says: "The world ever has been, and will be pretty equally divided between those two great parties, vulgarly called the *winners* and the *losers;* or, to speak more precisely, between those who are discontented that they have no power, and those who never think they can have enough. Now, it is absolutely impossible to please both sides either by temporizing, trimming, or retreating; the two former justly incur the censure of a wicked heart, the latter, that of cowardice; and fairly and manfully fighting the battle out, is in the opinion of many worse than either."

On the 8th of September, A. D. 1762, the war still continuing in North America and the West Indies, Governor Bernard made his speech to both Houses, and presented a *requisition* of Sir Jeffery Amherst, that the Massachusetts troops should be continued in pay during the winter.

Mr. Otis made a speech, the outlines of which he has recorded in this pamphlet, urging a compliance with the Governor's recommendation and General Amherst's requisition; and concluding with a motion for a committee to consider of both.

A committee was appointed, of which Mr. Otis was one, and reported not only a continuance of the troops already in service, but an addition of nine hundred men, with an augmented bounty to encourage their enlistment.

If the orators on the 4th of July really wish to investigate the principles and feelings which produced the Revolution, they ought to study this pamphlet, and Dr. Mayhew's sermon on passive obedience and non-resistance, and all the documents of those days. The celebrations of independence have departed from the object of their institution as much as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts have from their charter. The institution had better be wholly abolished than continued an engine of the politics and feelings of the day, instead of a memorial of the principles and feelings of the Revolution half a century ago — I might have said for two centuries before.

This pamphlet of Mr. Otis exhibits the interesting spectacle of a great man glowing with loyalty to his sovereign, proud of his connection with the British empire, rejoicing in its prosperity, its triumphs, and its glory, exulting in the unexampled efforts of his own native province to promote them all; but at the same time grieving and complaining at the ungenerous treatment that province had received from its beginning from the mother country, and shuddering under the prospect of still greater ingratitude and cruelty from the same source. Hear a few of his words, and read all the rest.

"Mr. Speaker, — This province has upon all occasions been distinguished by its loyalty and readiness to contribute its most strenuous efforts for his Majesty's service. I hope this spirit will ever remain as an indelible characteristic of this people," &c. &c. "Our own immediate interest, therefore, as well as the general cause of our king and country, requires that we should contribute the last penny and the last drop of blood, rather than by any backwardness of ours his Majesty's measures should be embarrassed, and thereby any of the enterprises that may be planned for the regular troops miscarry. Some of these considerations, I presume, induced the Assembly upon his Majesty's requisition, signified last spring by Lord Egremont, so cheerfully and unanimously to raise thirty-three hundred men for the present campaign; and upon another requisition, signified by Sir Jeffery Amherst, to give a handsome bounty for enlisting about nine hundred more into the regular service. The colonies, we know, have often been blamed without cause; and we have had some share of it. Witness the miscarriage of the pretended expedition against Canada, in Queen Anne's time, just before the infamous treaty of Utrecht. It is well known, by some now living in this metropolis, that every article, that was to be provided here, was in such readiness, that the officers, both of the army and navy, expressed their utmost surprise at it upon their arrival. To some of them, no doubt, it was a disappointment; for in order to shift the blame of this shameful affair from themselves, they endeavored to lay it upon the New England colonies. I am therefore clearly for raising the men," &c. &c.

"This province has, since the year 1754, levied for his Majesty's service, as soldiers and seamen, near thirty thousand men,

besides what have been otherwise employed. One year, in particular, it was said that every fifth man was engaged in one shape or another. We have raised sums for the support of this war, that the last generation could hardly have formed any idea of. We are now deeply in debt," &c. &c.

On the 14th of September, the House received a message from the Governor, containing a somewhat awkward confession of certain expenditures of public money with advice of council, which had not been appropriated by the House. He had fitted out the Massachusetts sloop-of-war, increased her establishment of men, &c. Five years before, perhaps, this irregularity might have been connived at or pardoned; but since the debate concerning writs of assistance, and since it was known that the acts of trade were to be enforced, and a revenue collected by authority of Parliament, Mr. Otis's maxim, that "taxation without representation was tyranny," and that "expenditures of public money, without appropriations by the representatives of the people, were unconstitutional, arbitrary, and therefore tyrannical," had become popular proverbs. They were commonplace observations in the streets. It was impossible that Otis should not take fire upon this message of the Governor. He accordingly did take fire, and made that flaming speech, which Judge Minot calls a "*a warm speech*," without informing us who made it or what it contained. I wish Mr. Otis had given us this warm speech, as he has the comparatively cool one, at the opening of the session. But this is lost forever. It concluded, however, with a motion for a committee to consider the Governor's message and report. The committee was appointed, and Otis was the first after the speaker.

The committee reported the following answer and remonstrance, every syllable of which is Otis.

"*May it please your Excellency*, —

"The House have duly attended to your Excellency's message of the eleventh instant relating to the Massachusetts sloop, and are humbly of opinion that there is not the least necessity for keeping up her present complement of men, and, therefore, desire that your Excellency would be pleased to reduce them to six, the old establishment made for said sloop by the General Court. Justice to ourselves and to our constituents obliges us to remonstrate against the method of making or increasing establishments by the Governor and Council.

"It is, in effect, taking from the House their most darling privilege, the right of originating all taxes.

"It is, in short, annihilating one branch of legislation. And when once the representatives of the people give up this privilege, the government will very soon become arbitrary.

"No necessity, therefore, can be sufficient to justify a House of Representatives in giving up such a privilege; for it would be of little consequence to the people, whether they were subject to George or Louis, the King of Great Britain or the French King, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without parliament.

"Had this been the first instance of the kind, we might not have troubled your Excellency about it; but lest the matter should go into precedent, we earnestly beseech your Excellency, as you regard the peace and welfare of the province, that no measures of this nature be taken for the future, let the advice of the Council be what it may."

This remonstrance being read, was accepted by a large majority, and sent up and presented to his Excellency by a committee, of whom Mr. Otis was one.

"The same day the above remonstrance was delivered, the town was alarmed with a report, that the House had sent a message to his Excellency, reflecting upon his Majesty's person and government, and highly derogatory from his crown and dignity, and therein desired that his Excellency would in no case take the advice of his Majesty's Council."

The Governor's letter to the Speaker is as Judge Minot represents it. Upon reading it, the same person who had before cried out, "treason! treason!" when he first read the offensive words, now cried out, "rase them! rase them!" They were accordingly expunged.

"In the course of the debate, a new and surprising doctrine was advanced. We have seen the times when the majority of a council, by their words and actions, have seemed to think themselves obliged to comply with every thing proposed by the chair, and to have no rule of conduct but a Governor's will and pleasure. But now for the first time it was asserted that the Governor, in all cases, was obliged to act according to the advice of the council, and consequently would be deemed to have no judgment of his own."

In page 17, Mr. Otis enters on his apology, excuse, or justification of the offensive words, which, as it is as facetious as it is edifying, I will transcribe at length in his own words, namely:

"In order to excuse, if not altogether justify the offensive passage, and clear it from ambiguity, I beg leave to premise two or three data. 1. God made all men naturally equal. 2. The ideas of earthly superiority, preëminence, and grandeur, are educational, at least acquired, not innate. 3. Kings were, and plantation governors should be, made for the good of the people, and not the people for them. 4. No government has a right to make hobby-horses, asses, and slaves of the subject; nature having made sufficient of the two former for all the lawful purposes of man, from the harmless peasant in the field to the most refined politician in the cabinet; but none of the last, which infallibly proves they are unnecessary. 5. Though most governments are *de facto* arbitrary, and, consequently, the curse and scandal of human nature, yet none are *de jure* arbitrary. 6. The British constitution of government, as now established in his Majesty's person and family, is the wisest and best in the world. 7. The King of Great Britain is the best as well as most glorious monarch upon the globe, and his subjects the happiest in the universe. 8. It is most humbly presumed, the King would have all his plantation governors follow his royal example, in a wise and strict adherence to the principles of the British constitution, by which, in conjunction with his other royal virtues, he is enabled to reign in the hearts of a brave and generous, a free and loyal people. 9. This is the summit, the *ne plus ultra* of human glory and felicity. 10. The French King is a despotic, arbitrary prince, and, consequently, his subjects are very miserable.

"Let us now take a more careful review of this passage which by some out of doors has been represented as seditious, rebellious, and traitorous. I hope none, however, will be so wanting to the interests of their country, as to represent the matter in this light on the east side of the Atlantic, though recent instances of such a conduct might be quoted, wherein the province has, after its most strenuous efforts during this and other wars, been painted in all the odious colors that avarice, malice, and the worst passions could suggest.

"The House assert, that 'it would be of little consequence to the people, whether they were subject to George or Louis, the King of Great Britain or the French King, if both were arbitrary; as both would be, if both could levy taxes without Parliament.' Or, in the same words transposed, without the least alteration of the sense, 'it would be of little consequence to the people, whether they were subject to George, the King of Great Britain, or Louis, the French King, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without Parliament.'

"The first question that would occur to a philosopher, if any question could be made about it, would be, whether the position were true. But truth being of little importance with most modern politicians, we shall touch lightly upon that topic, and proceed to inquiries of a more interesting nature.

"That arbitrary government implies the worst of temporary evils, or, at least, the continual danger of them, is certain. That a man would be pretty equally subjected to these evils, under every arbitrary government, is clear. That I should die very soon after my head should be cut off, whether by a sabre or a broadsword, whether chopped off to gratify a tyrant, by the Christian name of Tom, Dick, or Harry, is evident. That the name of the tyrant would be of no more avail to save my life than the name of the executioner, needs no proof. It is, therefore, manifestly of no importance what a prince's Christian name is, if he be arbitrary, any more, indeed, than if he were not arbitrary. So the whole amount of this dangerous proposition may, at least in one view, be reduced to this, namely: *It is of little importance what a king's Christian name is.* It is, indeed, of importance, that a king, a governor, and all other good Christians, should have a Christian name, but whether Edward, Francis, or William, is of none, that I can discern. It being a rule to put the most mild and favorable construction upon words that they can possibly bear, it will follow that this proposition is a very harmless one, that cannot by any means tend to prejudice his Majesty's person, crown, dignity, or cause, all which I deem equally sacred with his Excellency.

"If this proposition will bear a hundred different constructions, they must all be admitted before any that imports any bad meaning, much more a treasonable one.

"It is conceived, the House intended nothing disrespectful to

his Majesty, his government, or governor, in those words. It would be very injurious to insinuate this of a House, that upon all occasions has distinguished itself by a truly loyal spirit, and which spirit possesses at least nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand of their constituents throughout the province. One good-natured construction, at least, seems to be implied in the assertion, and that pretty strongly, namely, that in the present situation of Great Britain and France; it is of vast importance to be a Briton rather than a Frenchman, as the French King is an arbitrary, despotic prince, but the King of Great Britain is not so *de jure*, *de facto*, nor by inclination. A greater difference on this side the grave cannot be found than that which subsists between British subjects and the slaves of tyranny.

"Perhaps it may be objected, that there is some difference even between arbitrary princes in this respect, at least, that some are more rigorous than others. It is granted; but, then, let it be remembered, that the life of man is a vapor that soon vanisheth away, and we know not who may come after him, a wise man or a fool; though the chances before and since Solomon have ever been in favor of the latter. Therefore, it is said, of little consequence. Had it been *no* instead of *little*, the clause, upon the most rigid stricture, might have been found barely exceptionable.

"Some fine gentlemen have charged the expression as indelicate. This is a capital impeachment in politics, and therefore demands our most serious attention. The idea of delicacy, in the creed of some politicians, implies, that an inferior should, at the peril of all that is near and dear to him, that is, his interest, avoid every the least trifle that can offend his superior. Does my superior want my estate? I must give it him, and that with a good grace; which is appearing, and, if possible, being really obliged to him, that he will condescend to take it. The reason is evident; it might give him some little pain or uneasiness to see me whimpering, much more openly complaining, at the loss of a little glittering dirt. I must, according to this system, not only endeavor to acquire myself, but impress upon all around me, a reverence and passive obedience to the sentiments of my superior, little short of adoration. Is the superior in contemplation a king? I must consider him as God's vicegerent, clothed with unlimited power, his will the supreme law,

and not accountable for his actions, let them be what they may, to any tribunal upon earth. Is the superior a plantation governor? He must be viewed, not only as the most excellent representation of majesty, but as a viceroy in his department, and *quoad* provincial administration, to all intents and purposes, vested with all the prerogatives that were ever exercised by the most absolute prince in Great Britain.

"The votaries of this sect are all monopolizers of offices, peculators, informers, and generally the seekers of all kinds. It is better, say they, to give up any thing and every thing quietly, than contend with a superior who, by his prerogative, can do, and, as the vulgar express it, right or wrong, will have whatever he pleases. For you must know, that, according to some of the most refined and fashionable systems of modern politics, the ideas of right and wrong, and all the moral virtues, are to be considered only as the vagaries of a weak or distempered imagination in the possessor, and of no use in the world, but for the skilful politician to convert, to his own purposes of power and profit. With these,

> 'The love of country is an empty name;
> For gold they hunger, but ne'er thirst for fame.'

"It is well known that the least 'patriotic spark' unawares 'catched' and discovered, disqualifies a candidate from all further preferment in this famous and flourishing order of knights-errant. It must, however, be confessed that they are so Catholic as to admit all sorts, from the knights of the post to a garter and star, provided they are thoroughly divested of the fear of God and the love of mankind; and have concentrated all their views in dear self, with them the only 'sacred and well-beloved name' or thing in the universe. See Cardinal Richelieu's Political Testament, and the greater Bible of the Sect, Mandeville's Fable of the Bees. Richelieu expressly, in solemn earnest, without any sarcasm or irony, advises the discarding all honest men from the presence of a prince, and from even the purlieus of a court. According to Mandeville, 'the moral virtues are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride.' The most darling principle of the great apostle of the order, who has done more than any mortal towards diffusing corruption, not only through the three kingdoms, but

through the remotest dominions, is, that every man has his price, and that, if you bid high enough, you are sure of him.

"To those who have been taught to bow at the name of a king with as much ardor and devotion as a Papist at the sight of a crucifix, the assertion under examination may appear harsh; but *there is an immense difference between the sentiments of a British House of Commons remonstrating, and those of a courtier cringing for a favor. A House of Representatives here, at least, bears an equal proportion to a Governor, with that of a House of Commons to the King.* There is, indeed, one difference in favor of a House of Representatives. When a House of Commons addresses the King, they speak to their sovereign, who is truly the most august personage upon earth. When a House of Representatives remonstrate to a Governor, they speak to a fellow-subject, though a superior, who is undoubtedly entitled to decency and respect, but I hardly think to quite so much reverence as his master.

"It may not be amiss to observe, that a form of speech may be in no sort improper, when used *arguendo*, or for illustration, speaking of the king, which same form may be very harsh, indecent, and ridiculous, if spoken to the king.

"The expression under censure has had the approbation of divers gentlemen of sense, who are quite unprejudiced by any party. They have taken it to imply a compliment rather than any indecent reflection upon his Majesty's wise and gracious administration. It seems strange, therefore, that the House should be so suddenly charged by his Excellency with impropriety, groundless insinuations, &c.

"What cause of so bitter repentance, 'again and again,' could possibly have taken place, if this clause had been printed in the journal, I cannot imagine. If the case be fairly represented, I guess the province can be in no danger from a House of Representatives, daring to speak plain English, when they are complaining of a grievance. I sincerely believe that the House had no disposition to enter into any contest with the Governor or Council. Sure I am, that the promoters of this address had no such view. On the contrary, there is the highest reason to presume that the House of Representatives will, at all times, rejoice in the prosperity of the Governor and Council, and contribute their utmost assistance in supporting those two

branches of the legislature in all their just rights and preëminence. But the House is, and ought to be, jealous and tenacious of its own privileges; *these are a sacred deposit, intrusted by the people, and the jealousy of them is a godly jealousy.*"

Allow me now, Mr. Tudor, a few remarks.

1. Why has the sublime compliment of "treason! treason!" made to Mr. Henry, in 1765, been so celebrated, when that to Mr. Otis, in 1762, three years before, has been totally forgotten? Because the Virginia patriot has had many trumpeters, and very loud ones; but the Massachusetts patriot none, though false accusers and vile calumniators in abundance.

2. I know not whether Judge Minot was born in 1762. He certainly never saw, heard, felt, or understood any thing of the principles or feelings of that year. If he had, he could not have given so frosty an account of it. The "warm speech" he mentions, was an abridgment or second edition of Otis's argument in 1761 against the execution of the acts of trade. It was a flaming declaration against taxation without representation. It was a warning voice against the calamities that were coming upon his country. It was an ardent effort to alarm and arouse his countrymen against the menacing system of parliamentary taxation.

3. Bernard was no great things, but he was not a fool. It is impossible to believe, that he thought the offensive passage treason, sedition, or of such danger and importance as he represented it. But his design was to destroy Otis. "There is your enemy," said Bernard, (after a Scottish general,) "if ye do not kill him, he will kill you."

4. How many volumes are concentrated in this little fugitive pamphlet, the production of a few hurried hours, amidst the continual solicitations of a crowd of clients For his business at the bar, at that time, was very extensive and of the first importance, and amidst the host of politicians, suggesting their plans and schemes, claiming his advice and directions.

5. Look over the declaration of rights and wrongs issued by Congress in 1774. Look into the declaration of independence in 1776. Look into the writings of Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley. Look into all the French constitutions of government; and, to cap the climax, look into Mr. Thomas Paine's Common Sense, Crisis, and Rights of Man. What can you find that is not to

be found in solid substance in this "Vindication of the House of Representatives?"

6. Is it not an affront to common sense, an insult to truth, virtue, and patriotism, to represent Patrick Henry, though he was my friend as much as Otis, as the father of the American Revolution and the founder of American independence? The gentleman who has done this, sincerely believed what he wrote, I doubt not; but he ought to be made sensible that he is of yesterday, and knows nothing of the real origin of the American Revolution.

7. If there is any bitterness of spirit discernible in Mr. Otis's vindication, this was not natural to him. He was generous, candid, manly, social, friendly, agreeable, amiable, witty, and gay, by nature and by habit; honest almost to a proverb, though quick and passionate against meanness and deceit. But at this time he was agitated by anxiety for his country, and irritated by a torrent of slander and scurrility, constantly pouring upon him from all quarters.

Mr. Otis has fortified his vindication in a long and learned note, which, in mercy to my eyes and fingers, I must borrow another hand to transcribe in another sheet.[1]

"This other original, Mr. Locke has demonstrated to be the consent of a free people. It is possible there are a few, and I desire to thank God there is no reason to think there are many among us, that cannot bear the names of liberty and property, much less that the things signified by those terms should be enjoyed by the vulgar. These may be inclined to brand some of the principles advanced in the Vindication of the House, with the odious epithets, *seditious* and *levelling*. Had any thing to justify them been quoted from Colonel Algernon Sidney, or other British martyrs to the liberty of their country, an outcry of rebellion would not be surprising. The authority of Mr. Locke has therefore been preferred to all others, for these further reasons. 1. He was not only one of the most wise as well as most honest, but the most impartial man that ever lived. 2. He professedly wrote his discourses on government, as he himself expresses it, 'to establish the throne of the great re-

[1] Here follow quotations from Locke on Government, Part II. Ch. iv., Ch. xi., Ch. xiv., B. I. Ch. ii. and B. II. Ch. ii., touching the origin of government, which are omitted.

storer, King William; to make good his title in the consent of the people, which being the only one of all lawful governments, he had more fully and clearly than any prince in Christendom, and to justify to the world the people of England, whose love of liberty, their just and natural rights, with their resolution to preserve them, saved the nation when it was on the brink of slavery and ruin.' By this title, our illustrious sovereign, George 3d (whom God long preserve), now holds. 3. Mr. Locke was as great an ornament, under a crowned head, as the Church of England ever had to boast of. Had all her sons been of his wise, moderate, tolerant principles, we should probably never have heard of those civil dissensions that have so often brought the nation to the borders of perdition. Upon the score of his being a churchman, however, his sentiments are less liable to those invidious reflections and insinuations, that high-flyers, jacobites, and other stupid bigots, are apt, too liberally, to bestow, not only upon dissenters of all denominations, but upon the moderate, and, therefore, infinitely the most valuable part of the Church of England itself."

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 29 May, 1818.

As Holly is a diamond of a superior water, it would be crushed to powder by mountainous oppression in any other country. Even in this he is a light shining in a dark place. His system is founded in the hopes of mankind, but they delight more in their fears. When will man have juster notions of the universal, eternal cause? Then will rational Christianity prevail. I regret Holly's misfortune in not finding you, on his account, to whom an interview with you would have been a lasting gratification.

Waterhouse's pen, "*labitur et labetur.*" He has let it run on with too much fluency. I have not a tenth part of the vivacity, activity, memory, or promptitude and punctuality in correspondence which he ascribes to me. I can answer but few of the letters I receive, and those only with short scratches of the pen.

I think, with you, that it is difficult to say at what moment the Revolution began. In my opinion, it began as early as the first plantation of the country. Independence of Church and Parliament was a fixed principle of our predecessors in 1620, as it was of Samuel Adams and Christopher Gadsden in 1776; and independence of Church and Parliament was always kept in view in this part of the country, and, I believe, in most others. The hierarchy and parliamentary authority ever were dreaded and detested even by a majority of professed Episcopalians. I congratulate you upon your "canine appetite" for reading. I have been equally voracious for several years, and it has kept me alive. It is policy in me to despise and abhor the writing-table, for it is a bunch of grapes out of reach. Had I your eyes and fingers, I should scribble forever such poor stuff as I have been writing by fits and by starts for fifty or sixty years, without ever correcting or revising any thing.

Helluo as I am, I hunger and thirst after what I shall never see, — Napoleon's publication of the report of his Institute of Cairo. Denon's volumes have excited an inextinguishable curiosity for an unattainable object.

Mr. Coffee[1] has been mentioned to me by my son; he will be welcome. But though Robin's alive, he is not alive like to be. Mr. Coffee must be very quick, or Robin may die in his hands. Mr. Binon, a French artist, from Lyons, who has studied eight years in Italy, has lately taken my bust. He appears to be an artist, and a man of letters. I let them do what they like with my old head. When we come to be cool in the future world, I think we cannot choose but smile at the gambols of ambition, avarice, pleasure, sport, and caprices here below. Perhaps we may laugh as the angels do in the French fable. At a convivial repast of a club of choice spirits, of whom Gabriel and Michael were the most illustrious, after nectar and ambrosia had set their hearts at ease, they began to converse upon the *mécanique céleste*. After discussing the Zodiac, and the constellations of the solar system, they condescended to this speck of dirt, the earth, and remarked some of its inhabitants, the lion, the elephant, the eagle, and even the fidelity, gratitude, and adroitness of the dog. At last, one of them recollected

[1] This gentleman was a sculptor, to whom Mr. Jefferson had given a letter of introduction.

man. What a fine countenance! What an elegant figure! What subtilty, ingenuity, versatility, agility, and, above all, a rational creature! At this, the whole board broke out into a broad ha! ha! ha! that resounded through the vault of heaven, exclaiming, "Man a rational creature! How could any rational being ever dream that man was a rational creature?"

After all, I hope to meet my wife, and friends, ancestors and posterity, sages, ancient and modern. I believe I could get over all my objections to meeting Alexander Hamilton and Tim Pick, if I could see a symptom of penitence in either.

My fatigued eyes and fingers command me, very reluctantly, to subscribe abruptly.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 1 June, 1818.

No man could have written from memory Mr. Otis's argument of four or five hours, against the acts of trade, as revenue laws, and against writs of assistance, as a tyrannical engine to execute them, the next day after it was spoken. How awkward, then, would be an attempt to do it after a lapse of fifty-seven years! Nevertheless, some of the heads of his discourse are so indelibly imprinted on my mind, that I will endeavor to give you some very short hints of them.

1. He began with an exordium, containing an apology for his resignation of the office of Advocate-General in the Court of Admiralty; and for his appearance in that cause, in opposition to the Crown, and in favor of the town of Boston, and the merchants of Boston and Salem.

2. A dissertation on the rights of man in a state of nature. He asserted that every man, merely natural, was an independent sovereign, subject to no law, but the law written on his heart, and revealed to him by his Maker in the constitution of his nature and the inspiration of his understanding and his conscience. His right to his life, his liberty, no created being could rightfully contest. Nor was his right to his property less incontestable. The club that he had snapped from a tree, for a staff or for defence, was his own. His bow and arrow were

his own; if by a pebble he had killed a partridge or a squirrel, it was his own. No creature, man or beast, had a right to take it from him. If he had taken an eel, or a smelt, or a sculpion, it was his property. In short, he sported upon this topic with so much wit and humor, and at the same time so much indisputable truth and reason, that he was not less entertaining than instructive. He asserted that these rights were inherent and inalienable. That they never could be surrendered or alienated but by idiots or madmen, and all the acts of idiots and lunatics were void, and not obligatory by all the laws of God and man. Nor were the poor negroes forgotten. Not a Quaker in Philadelphia, or Mr. Jefferson, of Virginia, ever asserted the rights of negroes in stronger terms. Young as I was, and ignorant as I was, I shuddered at the doctrine he taught; and I have all my lifetime shuddered, and still shudder, at the consequences that may be drawn from such premises. Shall we say, that the rights of masters and servants clash, and can be decided only by force? I adore the idea of gradual abolitions! But who shall decide how fast or how slowly these abolitions shall be made?

3. From individual independence he proceeded to association. If it was inconsistent with the dignity of human nature to say that men were gregarious animals, like wild horses and wild geese, it surely could offend no delicacy to say they were social animals by nature, that there were mutual sympathies, and, above all, the sweet attraction of the sexes, which must soon draw them together in little groups, and by degrees in larger congregations, for mutual assistance and defence. And this must have happened before any formal covenant, by express words or signs, was concluded. When general counsels and deliberations commenced, the objects could be no other than the mutual defence and security of every individual for his life, his liberty, and his property. To suppose them to have surrendered these in any other way than by equal rules and general consent was to suppose them idiots or madmen, whose acts were never binding. To suppose them surprised by fraud, or compelled by force, into any other compact, such fraud and such force could confer no obligation. Every man had a right to trample it under foot whenever he pleased. In short, he asserted these rights to be derived only from nature and the author of nature;

that they were inherent, inalienable, and indefeasible by any laws, pacts, contracts, covenants, or stipulations, which man could devise.

4. These principles and these rights were wrought into the English constitution as fundamental laws. And under this head he went back to the old Saxon laws, and to Magna Charta and the fifty confirmations of it in Parliament, and the execrations ordained against the violators of it, and the national vengeance which had been taken on them from time to time, down to the Jameses and Charleses; and to the petition of rights and the bill of rights, and the Revolution. He asserted, that the security of these rights to life, liberty, and property, had been the object of all those struggles against arbitrary power, temporal and spiritual, civil and political, military and ecclesiastical, in every age. He asserted, that our ancestors, as British subjects, and we, their descendants, as British subjects, were entitled to all those rights, by the British constitution, as well as by the law of nature, and our provincial charter, as much as any inhabitant of London or Bristol, or any part of England; and were not to be cheated out of them by any phantom of "virtual representation," or any other fiction of law or politics, or any monkish trick of deceit and hypocrisy.

5. He then examined the acts of trade, one by one, and demonstrated, that if they were considered as revenue laws, they destroyed all our security of property, liberty, and life, every right of nature, and the English constitution, and the charter of the province. Here he considered the distinction between "external and internal taxes," at that time a popular and commonplace distinction. But he asserted there was no such distinction in theory, or upon any principle but "necessity." The necessity that the commerce of the empire should be under one direction, was obvious. The Americans had been so sensible of this necessity, that they had connived at the distinction between external and internal taxes, and had submitted to the acts of trade as regulations of commerce, but never as taxations or revenue laws. Nor had the British government, till now, ever dared to attempt to enforce them as taxation or revenue laws. They had lain dormant in that character for a century almost. The navigation act he allowed to be binding upon us, because we had consented to it by our

own legislature. Here he gave a history of the navigation act of the first of Charles II., a plagiarism from Oliver Cromwell. This act had lain dormant for fifteen years. In 1675, after repeated letters and orders from the king, Governor Winthrop very candidly informs his Majesty, that the law had not been executed, because it was thought unconstitutional, Parliament not having authority over us.

I shall pursue this subject in a short series of letters. Providence pursues its incomprehensible and inscrutable designs in its own way and by its own instruments. And as I sincerely believe Mr. Otis to have been the earliest and the principal founder of one of the greatest political revolutions that ever occurred among men, it seems to me of some importance that his name and character should not be forgotten. Young men should be taught to honor merit, but not to adore it. The greatest men have the greatest faults.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 9 June, 1818.

I have promised you hints of the heads of Mr. Otis's oration, argument, speech, call it what you will, against the acts of trade, as revenue laws, and against writs of assistance, as tyrannical instruments to carry them into execution.

But I enter upon the performance of my promise to you not without fear and trembling, because I am in the situation of a lady, whom you knew first as my client, the widow of Dr. Ames, of Dedham, and afterwards as the mother of your pupil, the late brilliant orator, Fisher Ames, of Dedham. This lady died last year, at 95 or 96 years of age. In one of her last years she said, she "was in an awkward situation; for if she related any fact of an old date, anybody might contradict her, for she could find no witness to keep her in countenance."

Mr. Otis, after rapidly running over the history of the continual terrors, vexations, and irritations, which our ancestors endured from the British government, from 1620, under James I. and Charles I.; and acknowledging the tranquillity under the

parliament of Cromwell, from 1648, to the restoration, in 1660, produced the navigation act as the first fruit of the blessed restoration of a Stuart's reign.

This act is in the twelth year of Charles II., chapter 18,

"An act for the encouraging and increasing of shipping and navigation."

"For the increase of shipping and encouragement of the navigation of this nation, wherein, under the good Providence and protection of God, the wealth, safety, and strength of this kingdom, is so much concerned, be it enacted, that from and after the first day of December, 1660, and from thence forward, no goods or commodities, whatsoever, shall be imported into, or exported out of, any lands, islands, plantations, or territories, to his Majesty belonging or in his possession, or which may hereafter belong unto or be in the possession of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, in Asia, Africa, or America, in any other ship or ships, vessel or vessels, whatsoever, but in such ships or vessels, as do truly and without fraud, belong only to the people of England or Ireland, dominion of Wales, or town of Berwick upon Tweed, or are of the build of, and belonging to, any of the said lands, islands, plantations, or territories, as the proprietors and right owners thereof, and whereof the master, and three fourths of the mariners, at least, are English; under the penalty of the forfeiture and loss of all the goods and commodities which shall be imported into, or exported out of any of the aforesaid places, in any other ship or vessel, as also of the ship or vessel, with all its guns, furniture, tackle, ammunition, and apparel; one third part thereof to his majesty, his heirs and successors; one third part to the governor of such land, plantation, island, or territory, where such default shall be committed, in case the said ship or goods be there seized; or, otherwise, that third part also to his Majesty, his heirs and successors; and the other third part to him or them who shall seize, inform, or sue for the same in any court of record, by bill, information, plaint, or other action, wherein no essoin, protection, or wager of law shall be allowed. And all admirals and other commanders at sea, of any of the ships of war or other ships, having commission from his Majesty, or from his heirs or successors, are hereby authorized, and strictly required to seize and bring in as prize all such ships or vessels as shall have offended contrary hereunto, and deliver them to the Courts of Admiralty, there to be proceeded against; and in case of condemnation, one moiety of such forfeitures shall be to the use of such admirals or commanders, and their companies, to be divided and proportioned among them, according to the rules and orders of the sea, in case of ships taken prize; and the other moiety to the use of his Majesty, his heirs and successors."

Section second enacts, all governors shall take a solemn oath to do their utmost, that every clause shall be punctually obeyed. See the statute at large.

See also section third of this statute, which I wish I could transcribe.

Section fourth enacts, that no goods of foreign growth, production, or manufacture shall be brought, even in English ship-

ping, from any other countries, but only from those of the said growth, production, or manufacture, under all the foregoing penalties.

Mr. Otis commented on this statute in all its parts, especially on the foregoing section, with great severity. He expatiated on its narrow, contracted, selfish, and exclusive spirit. Yet he could not and would not deny its policy, or controvert the necessity of it, for England, in that age, surrounded as she was by France, Spain, Holland, and other jealous rivals; nor would he dispute the prudence of Governor Leverett, and the Massachusetts legislature, in adopting it, in 1675, after it had lain dormant for fifteen years; though the adoption of it was infinitely prejudicial to the interests, the growth, the increase, the prosperity of the colonies in general, of New England in particular, and most of all, to the town of Boston. It was an immense sacrifice to what was called the mother country. Mr. Otis thought that this statute ought to have been sufficient to satisfy the ambition, the avarice, the cupidity of any nation, but especially of one who boasted of being a tender mother of her children colonies; and when those children had always been so fondly disposed to acknowledge the condescending tenderness of their dear indulgent mother.

This statute, however, Mr. Otis said, was wholly prohibitory. It abounded, indeed, with penalties and forfeitures, and with bribes to governors and informers, and custom-house officers, and naval officers and commanders; but it imposed no taxes. Taxes were laid in abundance by subsequent acts of trade; but this act laid none. Nevertheless, this was one of the acts that were to be carried into strict execution by these writs of assistance. Houses were to be broken open, and if a piece of Dutch linen could be found, from the cellar to the cock-loft, it was to be seized and become the prey of governors, informers, and majesty.

When Mr. Otis had extended his observations on this act of navigation, much farther than I dare to attempt to repeat, he proceeded to the subsequent acts of trade. These, he contended, imposed taxes, and enormous taxes, burdensome taxes, oppressive, ruinous, intolerable taxes. And here he gave the reins to his genius, in declamation, invective, philippic, call it which you will, against *the tyranny of taxation without representation.*

But Mr. Otis's observations on those acts of trade must be postponed for another letter.

Let me, however, say, in my own name, if any man wishes to investigate thoroughly, the causes, feelings, and principles of the Revolution, he must study this act of navigation and the acts of trade, as a philosopher, a politician, and a philanthropist.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 17 June, 1818.

The next statute produced and commented by Mr. Otis was the 15th of Charles II., that is, 1663, chapter 7, —

"An act for the encouragement of trade."

Sec. 5. "And in regard his Majesty's plantations beyond the seas are inhabited and peopled by his subjects of this his kingdom of England, for the maintaining a greater correspondence and kindness between them, and *keeping them in a firmer dependence upon it*, and rendering them yet more beneficial and advantageous unto it, in the further employment and increase of English shipping and seamen, vent of English woolen and other manufactures and commodities, rendering the navigation to and from the same more cheap and safe, and making *this kingdom a staple*, not only of the commodities of those plantations, but also of the commodities of other countries and places, *for the supplying of them;* and it being the usage of other nations to keep their plantations trades to themselves."

Sec. 6. "Be it enacted, &c., that no commodity of the growth, production, or manufacture of Europe, shall be imported into any land, island, plantation, colony, territory, or place, to his Majesty belonging, or which shall hereafter belong unto or be in possession of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, in Asia, Africa, or America, (Tangier only excepted,) but what shall be *bonâ fide*, and without fraud, laden and shipped in England, Wales, or the town of Berwick upon Tweed, and in English built shipping, or which were *bonâ fide* bought before the 1st of October, 1662, and had such certificate thereof as is directed in one act, passed the last session of the present Parliament, entitled, "*An act for preventing frauds and regulating abuses in his Majesty's customs;*" and whereof the master and three fourths of the mariners, at least, are English, and which shall be carried directly thence to the said lands, islands, plantations, colonies, territories or places, and from no other place or places whatsoever; any law, statute, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding; under the penalty of the loss of all such commodities of the growth, production, or manufacture of Europe, as shall be imported into any of them, from any other place whatsoever, by land or water; and if by water, of the ship or vessel, also, in which

they were imported, with all her guns, tackle, furniture, ammunition, and apparel; one third part to his Majesty, his heirs, and successors; one third part to the governor of such land, island, plantation, colony, territory, or place, into which such goods were imported, if the said ship, vessel, or goods be there seized or informed against and sued for; or, otherwise, that third part, also, to his Majesty, his heirs, and successors; and the other third part to him or them who shall seize, inform, or sue for the same in any of his Majesty's courts in such of the said lands, islands, colonies, plantations, territories or places where the offence was committed, or in any court of record in England, by bill, information, plaint, or other action, wherein no *essoin*, protection, or wager of law shall be allowed."

Sections 7, 8, 9, and 10 of this odious instrument of mischief and misery to mankind, were all calculated to fortify by oaths and penalties the tyrannical ordinances of the preceding sections.

Mr. Otis's observations on these statutes were numerous, and some of them appeared to me at the time, young as I was, bitter. But as I cannot pretend to recollect those observations with precision, I will recommend to you and others to make your own remarks upon them.

You must remember, Mr. Tudor, that you and I had much trouble with these statutes after you came into my office, in 1770, and I had been tormented with them for nine years before, that is, from 1761. I have no scruple in making a confession with all the simplicity of Jean Jacques Rousseau, that I never turned over the leaves of these statutes, or any section of them, without pronouncing a hearty curse upon them. I felt them as a humiliation, a degradation, a disgrace to my country, and to myself as a native of it.

Let me respectfully recommend to the future orators on the 4th of July to peruse these statutes in pursuit of "principles and feelings that produced the revolution."

Oh! Mr. Tudor, when will France, Spain, England, and Holland renounce their selfish, contracted, exclusive systems of religion, government, and commerce? I fear, never. But they may depend upon it, their present systems of colonization cannot endure. Colonies universally, ardently breathe for independence. No man, who has a soul, will ever live in a colony under the present establishments one moment longer than necessity compels him.

But I must return to Mr. Otis. The burden of his song was "*writs of assistance*." All these rigorous statutes were

now to be carried into rigorous execution by the still more rigorous instruments of arbitrary power, "*writs of assistance*."

Here arose a number of very important questions. What were writs of assistance? Where were they to be found? When, where, and by what authority had they been invented, created, and established? Nobody could answer any of these questions. Neither Chief Justice Hutchinson, nor any one of his four associate judges, pretended to have ever read or seen in any book any such writ, or to know any thing about it. The court had ordered or requested the bar to search for precedents and authorities for it, but none were found. Otis pronounced boldly that there were none, and neither judge nor lawyer, bench or bar, pretended to confute him. He asserted farther, that there was no color of authority for it, but one produced by Mr. Gridley in a statute of the 13th and 14th of Charles II., which Mr. Otis said was neither authority, precedent, or color of either in America. Mr. Thacher said he had diligently searched all the books, but could find no such writ. He had indeed found in Rastall's Entries a thing which in some of its features resembled this, but so little like it on the whole, that it was not worth while to read it.

Mr. Gridley, who, no doubt, was furnished upon this great and critical occasion with all the information possessed by the governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary, custom-house officers, and all other crown officers, produced the statute of the 13th and 14th of Charles II., chapter eleventh, entitled, "An act to prevent frauds, and regulating abuses in his Majesty's customs," section fifth, which I will quote verbatim.

"And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that in case, after the clearing of any ship or vessel, by the person or persons which are or shall be appointed by his Majesty for managing the customs, or any their deputies, and discharging the watchmen and tidesmen from attendance thereupon, there shall be found on board such ship or vessel, any goods, wares, or merchandises, which have been concealed from the knowledge of the said person or persons, which are or shall be so appointed to manage the customs, and for which the custom, subsidy, and other duties due upon the importation thereof have not been paid; then the master, purser, or other person taking charge of said ship or vessel, shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds: and it shall be lawful to or for any person or persons authorized by *writ of assistance under the seal of his Majesty's court of exchequer*, to take a constable, headborough, or other public officer, inhabiting near unto the place, and in the daytime to enter and go into any house, shop, cellar, warehouse or room, or other place: and in case

of resistance, to break open doors, chests, trunks, and other packages, there to seize, and from thence to bring any kind of goods or merchandise whatsoever, prohibited and uncustomed, and to put and secure the same, in his Majesty's storehouse in the port, next to the place where such seizures shall be made."

Here is all the color for "writs of assistance," which the officers of the crown, aided by the researches of their learned counsel, Mr. Gridley, could produce.

Where, exclaimed Otis, is your seal of his Majesty's court of exchequer? And what has the court of exchequer to do here? But my sheet is full, and my patience exhausted for the present.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 24 June, 1818.

Mr. Otis said, such a "writ of assistance" might become the reign of Charles II. in England, and he would not dispute the taste of the Parliament of England in passing such an act, nor of the people of England in submitting to it; but it was not calculated for the meridian of America. The court of exchequer had no jurisdiction here. Her warrants and her writs were never seen here. Or if they should be, they would be waste paper. He insisted, however, that these warrants and writs were even in England inconsistent with the fundamental law, the natural and constitutional rights of the subjects. If, however, it would please the people of England, he might admit that they were legal there, but not here.

Diligent research had been made by Mr. Otis and Thacher, and by Gridley, aided, as may well be supposed, by the officers of the customs, and by all the conspirators against American liberty, on both sides the water, for precedents and examples of any thing similar to this writ of assistance, even in England. But nothing could be found, except the following: An act of the 12th of Charles II., chapter 22. "An act for the regulating the trade of Bay-making, in the Dutch Bay-hall, in Colchester." The fifth section of this statute, "for the better discovering, finding out, and punishing of the frauds and deceits, aforesaid, be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for the governors of the Dutch Bay-hall, or their officers, or any of them, from

time to time, in the daytime, to search any cart, wagon, or pack, wherein they shall have notice, or suspect any such deceitful bays to be; and also from time to time, with a constable, who are hereby required to be aiding and assisting them, to make search in any house, shop, or warehouse, where they are informed any such deceitful bays to be, and to secure and seize the same, and to carry them to the Dutch Bay-hall; and that such bays so seized and carried to the said hall, shall be confiscate and forfeit, to be disposed in such manner as the forfeitures herein before mentioned, to be paid by the weavers and fullers, are herein before limited and appointed."

The Dutch Bay-hall made sport for Otis and his audience; but was acknowledged to have no authority here, unless by certain distant analogies and constructions, which Mr. Gridley himself did not pretend to urge. Another ridiculous statute was of the 22d and 23d of Charles II., chapter 8th, "An act for the regulating the making of Kidderminster Stuffs."

By the eleventh section of this important law, it is enacted, "That the said president, wardens, and assistants of the said Kidderminster weavers, or any two or more of them, shall have, and hereby have power and authority to enter into and search the houses and workhouses of any artificer under the regulation of the said trade, at all times of the day, and usual times of opening shops and working; and into the shops, houses, and warehouses of any common buyer, dealer in, or retailer of any of the said cloths or stuffs, and into the houses and workhouses of any dyer, shearman, and all other workmen's houses and places of sale, or dressing of the said cloths or stuffs, and yarns, and may there view the said cloths, stuffs, and yarns respectively; and if any cloth, stuff, or yarns shall be found defective, to seize and carry away the same to be tried by a jury."

The wit, the humor, the irony, the satire played off by Mr. Otis in his observations on these acts of navigation, Dutch bays and Kidderminster stuffs, it would be madness in me to pretend to remember with any accuracy. But this I do say, that Horace's "*Irritat, mulcet, veris terroribus implet*," was never exemplified, in my hearing, with so great effect. With all his drollery, he intermixed solid and sober observations upon the acts of navigation, by Sir Joshua Child, and other English

writers upon trade, which I shall produce together in another letter.

It is hard to be called upon, at my age, to such a service as this. But it is the duty of

JOHN ADAMS.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 9 July, 1818.

In the search for something in the history and statutes of England, in any degree resembling this *monstrum horrendum ingens*, the writ of assistance, the following examples were found.

In the statute of the first year of King James the II., chapter 3d, "An act for granting to his Majesty an imposition upon all wines and vinegar," &c., section 8, it is enacted, "That the officers of his Majesty's customs, &c., shall have power and authority to enter on board ships and vessels, and make searches, and to do all other matters and things, which may tend to secure the true payment of the duties by this act imposed, and the due and orderly collection thereof, which any customers, collectors, or other officers of any of his Majesty's ports can or may do, touching the securing his Majesty's customs of tonnage and poundage," &c., &c., &c. I must refer to the statute for the rest.

In the statute of King James II., chapter 4, "An act for granting to his Majesty an imposition upon all tobacco and sugar imported," &c., section 5th, in certain cases, "the commissioners may appoint one or more officer or officers to enter into all the cellars, warehouses, store cellars, or other places whatsoever, belonging to such importer, to search, see, and try," &c., &c., &c. I must again refer to the statute for the rest, which is indeed nothing to the present purpose.

Though the portraits of Charles II. and James II. were blazing before his eyes, their characters and reigns were sufficiently odious to all but the conspirators against human liberty, to excite the highest applause of Otis's philippics against them and all the foregoing acts of their reigns, which writs of assist-

ance were now intended to enforce. Otis asserted and proved, that none of these statutes extended to America, or were obligatory here, by any rule of law ever acknowledged here, or ever before pretended in England.

Another species of statutes were introduced by the counsel for the crown, which I shall state as they occur to me without any regard to the order of time.

1st of James II., chapter 17, "An act for the revival and continuance of several acts of Parliament therein mentioned," in which the tobacco law, among others, is revived and continued.

13th and 14th of Charles II., chapter 13, "An act for prohibiting the importation of foreign bone-lace, cutwork, embroidery, fringe, band-strings, buttons, and needlework." Pray, Sir, do not laugh! for something very serious comes in section third.

"Be it further enacted, that for the preventing of the importing of the said manufactures as aforesaid, upon complaint and information given to the justices of the peace or any or either of them, within their respective counties, cities, and towns corporate, at times reasonable, he or they are hereby authorized and required to issue forth his or their warrants to the constables of their respective counties, cities, and towns corporate, to enter and search for such manufactures in the shops being open, or warehouses and dwelling-houses of such person or persons, as shall be suspected to have any such foreign bone-laces, embroideries, cutwork, fringe, band-strings, buttons, or needle-work within their respective counties, cities, and towns corporate, and to seize the same, any act, statute, or ordinance to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding."

Another curious act was produced, to prove the legality of writs of assistance, though it was no more to the purpose than all the others. I mean the statute of the 12th of Charles II., chapter 3d, "An act for the continuance of process and judicial proceedings continued." In which it is enacted, section first, "That no pleas, *writs*, bills, actions, suits, plaints, process, precepts, or other thing or things, &c., shall be in any wise discontinued," &c.

But I must refer to the act. I cannot transcribe. If any antiquarian should hereafter ever wish to review this period, he will see with compassion how such a genius as Otis was compelled to delve among the rubbish of such statutes, to defend the country against the gross sophistry of the crown and its officers.

Another act of 12 C. II., ch. 12, "An act for confirmation of judicial proceedings," in which it is enacted, &c., "that nor any

writs, or actions on, or returns of any writs, orders, or other proceedings in law or equity, had, made, given, taken, or done, or depending in the courts of chancery, king's bench, upper bench, common pleas, and court of exchequer, and court of exchequer chamber, or any of them, &c., in the kingdom of England, &c., shall be avoided, &c." I must refer to the statute.

In short, wherever the custom-house officers could find in any statute the word "writs," the word "continued," and the words "court of exchequer," they had instructed their counsel to produce it, though in express words restricted to "the realm." Mr. Gridley was incapable of prevarication or duplicity.

It was a moral spectacle, more affecting to me than any I have since seen upon any stage, to see a pupil treating his master with all the deference, respect, esteem, and affection of a son to a father, and that without the least affectation; while he baffled and confounded all his authorities, and confuted all his arguments and reduced him to silence.

Indeed, upon the principle of construction, inference, analogy, or corollary, by which they extended these acts to America, they might have extended the jurisdiction of the court of king's bench, and court of common pleas, and all the sanguinary statutes against crimes and misdemeanors, and all their church establishment of archbishops and bishops, priests, deacons, deans, and chapters; and all their acts of uniformity, and all their acts against conventicles.

I have no hesitation or scruple to say, that the commencement of the reign of George III. was the commencement of another Stuart's reign; and if it had not been checked by James Otis and others first, and by the great Chatham and others afterwards, it would have been as arbitrary as any of the four. I will not say it would have extinguished civil and religious liberty upon earth; but it would have gone great lengths towards it, and would have cost mankind even more than the French Revolution to preserve it. The most sublime, profound, and prophetic expression of Chatham's oratory that he ever uttered was, "I rejoice that America has resisted. Two millions of people reduced to servitude, would be fit instruments to make slaves of the rest."

Another statute was produced, 12 C. 2, cap. 19.

"An act to prevent frauds and concealments of his Majesty's customs and subsidies." "Be it enacted," &c., "that if any person or persons, &c., shall cause any goods, for which custom, subsidy, or other duties are due or payable, &c., to be landed or conveyed away, without due entry thereof first made and the customer or collector, or his deputy agreed with; that then and in such case, *upon oath thereof made* before the lord treasurer, or any of the barons of the exchequer, or chief magistrate of the port or place where the offence shall be committed, or the place next adjoining thereto, it shall be lawful to and for the lord-treasurer, or any of the barons of the exchequer, or the chief magistrate of the port or place, &c., to issue out a warrant to any person or persons, thereby enabling him or them, with the assistance of a sheriff, justice of the peace, or constable, to enter into any house in the daytime, where such goods are suspected to be concealed, and in case of resistance to break open such house, and to seize and secure the same goods so concealed; and all officers and ministers of justice are hereby required to be aiding and assisting thereunto."

Such was the sophistry; such the chicanery of the officers of the crown, and such their power of face, as to apply these statutes to America and to the petition for writs of assistance from the superior court.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 14 July, 1818.

Mr. Otis, to show the spirit of the acts of trade, those I have already quoted, as well as of those I shall hereafter quote, and as the best commentaries upon them, produced a number of authors upon trade, and read passages from them, which I shall recite, without pretending to remember the order in which he read them.

1. Sir Josiah Child, "A new Discourse of Trade." Let me recommend this old book to the perusal of my inquisitive fellow-citizens. A discerning mind will find useful observations on the interest of money, the price of labor, &c., &c., &c. I would quote them all, if I had time. But I will select one. In page 15, of his preface, he says, "I understand not the world so little as not to know, that he that will faithfully serve his country, must be *content* to pass through good report and evil report." I cannot agree to that word, *content*. I would substitute instead of it, the words, "as patient as he can."

Sir Josiah adds, "neither regard I which I meet with." This is too cavalierly spoken. It is not sound philosophy. Sir Joshua proceeds: "Truth I am sure at last will vindicate itself, and be found by my countrymen." Amen! So be it! I wish I could believe it.

But it is high time for me to return from this ramble to Mr. Otis's quotations from Sir Josiah Child, whose chapter 4, page 105, is "Concerning the Act of Navigation.". Probably this knight was one of the most active and able inflamers of the national pride in their navy and their commerce, and one of the principal promoters of that enthusiasm for the act of navigation, which has prevailed to this day. For this work was written about the year 1677, near the period when the court of Charles II. began to urge and insist on the strict execution of the act of navigation. Such pride in that statute did not become Charles, his court, or his nation of royalists and loyalists at that time. For shall I blush, or shall I boast, when I remember, that this act was not the invention of a Briton, but of an American. George Downing, a native of New England, educated at Harvard College, whose name, office, and title appear in their catalogue, went to England in the time of Lord Clarendon's civil wars, and became such a favorite of Cromwell and the ruling powers, that he was sent ambassador to Holland. He was not only not received, but ill treated, which he resented on his return to England, by proposing an act of navigation, which was adopted, and has ruined Holland, and would have ruined America, if she had not resisted.

To borrow the language of the great Dr. Johnson, this "dog" Downing must have had a head and brains, or, in other words, genius and address; but, if we may believe history, he was a scoundrel. To ingratiate himself with Charles II., he probably not only pleaded his merit in inventing the navigation act, but he betrayed to the block some of his old republican and revolutionary friends.

George Downing! Far from boasting of thee as my countryman, or of thy statute as an American invention, if it were lawful to wish for any thing past, that has not happened, I should wish that thou hadst been hanged, drawn, and quartered, instead of Hugh Peters and Sir Henry Vane. But no! This is too cruel for my nature! I rather wish, that thou

hadst been obliged to fly with thy project, and repent among the rocks and caves of the mountains in New England.

But where is Downing's statute? British policy has suppressed all the laws of England, from 1648 to 1660. The statute book contains not one line. Such are records, and such is history!

The nation, it seems, was not unanimous in its approbation of this statute. The great knight himself informs us, page 105, "that some wise and honest gentlemen and merchants doubted whether the inconveniences it has brought with it be not greater than the conveniences." This chapter was, therefore, written to answer all objections, and to vindicate and justify Downing's statute.

Mr. Otis cast an eye over this chapter, and adverted to such observations in it, as tended to show the spirit of the writer, and of the statute; which might be summed up in this comprehensive Machiavelian principle, *that earth, air, and seas, all colonies and all nations were to be made subservient to the growth, grandeur, and power of the British navy.*

And thus, truly, it happened. The two great knights, Sir George Downing and Sir Josiah Child, must be acknowledged to have been great politicians!

Mr. Otis proceeded to chapter 10 of this work, page 166, "Concerning Plantations." And he paused at the 6th proposition, in page 167, "That all colonies and plantations do endamage their mother kingdoms, whereof the trades of such plantations are not confined by severe laws, and good executions of those laws, to the mother kingdom."

Mr. Otis then proceeded to seize the key to the whole riddle, in page 168, proposition eleventh, "*that New England is the most prejudicial plantation to the kingdom of England.*" Sir George Downing, no doubt, said the same to Charles II.

Otis proceeded to page 170, near the bottom.

"*We must consider what kind of people they were and are that have and do transport themselves to our foreign plantations.*" New England, as every one knows, was originally inhabited, and hath since been successively replenished by a sort of people called Puritans, who could not conform to the ecclesiastical laws of England; but being wearied with church censures and persecutions, were forced to quit their fathers' land, to find out new habitations, as many of them did in Germany and Holland, as well as at New England; and had there not been a New England found for some of them, Germany and Holland, pro-

bably, had received the rest; but Old England, to be sure, had lost them all.

"Virginia and Barbadoes were first peopled by a sort of loose, vagrant people, vicious, and destitute of means to live at home (being either unfit for labor, or such as could find none to employ themselves about, or had so misbehaved themselves by whoring, thieving, or other debauchery, that none would set them on work), which merchants and masters of ships, by their agents (or spirits, as they were called), gathered up about the streets of London, and other places, clothed and transported, to be employed upon plantations; and these, I say, were such as, had there been no English foreign plantation in the world, could probably never have lived at home, to do service for their country, but must have come to be hanged, or starved, or died untimely of some of those miserable diseases that proceed from want and vice; or else have sold themselves for soldiers, to be knocked on the head, or starved, in the quarrels of our neighbors, as many thousands of brave Englishmen were in the low countries, as also in the wars of Germany, France, and Sweden, &c., or else, if they could, by begging or otherwise, arrive to the stock of 2*s.* 6*d.* to waft them over to Holland, become servants to the Dutch, who refuse none.

"But the principal growth and increase of the aforesaid plantations of Virginia and Barbadoes happened in, or immediately after, our late civil wars, when the worsted party, by the fate of war, being deprived of their estates, and having, some of them, never been bred to labor, and others made unfit for it by the lazy habit of a soldier's life, there wanting means to maintain them all abroad with his Majesty, many of them betook themselves to the aforesaid plantations; and great numbers of Scotch soldiers of his Majesty's army, after Worcester fight, were by the then prevailing powers voluntarily sent thither.

"Another great swarm or accession of new inhabitants to the aforesaid plantations, as also to New England, Jamaica, and all other his Majesty's plantations in the West Indies, ensued upon his Majesty's restoration, when the former prevailing party being by a divine hand of Providence brought under, the army disbanded, many officers displaced, and all the new purchasers of public titles dispossessed of their pretended lands, estates, &c., many became impoverished and destitute of employment; and, therefore, such as could find no way of living at home, and some who feared the reëstablishment of the ecclesiastical laws, under which they could not live, were forced to transport themselves, or sell themselves for a few years to be transported by others, to the foreign English plantations. The constant supply that the said plantations have since had, hath been such vagrant, loose people as I have before mentioned, picked up especially about the streets of London and Westminster, and malefactors condemned for crimes, for which, by the law, they deserved to die; and some of those people called quakers, banished for meeting on pretence of religious worship.

"Now, if from the premises it be duly considered what kind of persons those have been, by whom our plantations have at all times been replenished, I suppose it will appear, that such they have been, and under such circumstances, that if his Majesty had had no foreign plantations, to which they might have resorted, England, however, must have lost them."

Any man, who will consider with attention these passages from Sir Josiah Child, may conjecture what Mr. Otis's observations upon them were. As I cannot pretend to remember them verbatim and with precision, I can only say that they struck me very forcibly. They were short, rapid; he had not time to be long; but Tacitus himself could not express more in fewer words. My only fear is, that I cannot do him justice.

In the first place, there is a great deal of true history in this passage, which manifestly proves, that the emigrants to America, in general, were not only as good as the people in general, whom they left in England, but much better, more courageous, more enterprising, more temperate, more discreet, and more industrious, frugal, and conscientious. I mean the royalists as well as the republicans.

In the second place, there is a great deal of uncandid, ungenerous misrepresentation, and scurrilous exaggeration in this passage of the great knight, which proves him to have been a fit tool of Charles II., and a suitable companion, associate, and friend of the great knight, Sir George Downing, the second scholar in Harvard College catalogue.

But I will leave you, Mr. Tudor, to make your own observations and reflections upon these pages of Sir Josiah Child.

Mr. Otis read them with great reluctance; but he felt it his duty to read them, in order to show the spirit of the author, and the spirit of Sir George Downing's navigation act.

But, my friend, I am weary. I have not done with Mr. Otis or Sir Josiah Child. I must postpone to another letter.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 17 July, 1818.

Mr. Otis proceeded to page 198, of this great work of the great knight, Sir Josiah Child.

"Proposition eleventh. That New England is the most prejudicial plantation in this kingdom."

"I am now to write of a people whose frugality, industry, and temperance, and the happiness of whose laws and institutions, do promise to themselves long life, with a wonderful increase of people, riches, and power; and although no

men ought to envy that virtue and wisdom in others, which themselves either cannot or will not practise, but rather to commend and admire it, yet I think it is the duty of every good man primarily to respect the welfare of his native country. And, therefore, though I may offend some whom I would not willingly displease, I cannot omit, in the progress of this discourse, to take notice of some particulars, wherein Old England suffers diminution by the growth of those colonies settled in New England, and how that plantation differs from those more southerly, with respect to the gain or loss of this kingdom; — namely,

"1. All our American plantations, except that of New England, produce commodities of different natures from those of this kingdom, as sugar, tobacco, cocoa, wool, ginger, sundry sorts of dying woods, &c., whereas, New England produces generally the same we have here, namely, corn and cattle. Some quantity of fish they do likewise kill, but that is taken and saved altogether by their own inhabitants, which prejudiceth our Newfoundland trade; where, as hath been said, very few are, or ought according to prudence to be employed in those fisheries but the inhabitants of Old England. The other commodities we have from them are some few great masts, furs, and train oil, whereof the yearly value amounts to very little; the much greater value of returns from thence being made in sugar, cotton, wool, tobacco, and such like commodities, which they first receive from some other of his Majesty's plantations in barter for dry codfish, salt mackerel, beef, pork, bread, beer, flour, peas, &c., which they supply Barbadoes, Jamaica, &c., with, to the diminution of the vent of those commodities from this kingdom; the great expense whereof in our West India plantations would soon be found in the advance of the value of our lands in England, were it not for the vast and almost incredible supplies those colonies have from New England.

"2. The people of New England, by virtue of their primitive charters, being not so strictly tied to the observation of the laws of this kingdom, do sometimes assume a liberty of trading contrary to the act of navigation, by reason whereof many of our American commodities, especially tobacco and sugar, are transported, in New England shipping, directly into Spain and other foreign countries, without being landed in England, or paying any duty to his Majesty, which is not only loss to the king, and a prejudice to the navigation of Old England, but also a total exclusion of the old English merchant from the vent of those commodities in those ports where the new English vessels trade; because there being no custom paid on those commodities in New England, and a great custom paid upon them in Old England, it must necessarily follow that the New English merchant will be able to afford his commodity much cheaper at the market than the Old English merchant; and those that can sell cheapest, will infallibly engross the whole trade, sooner or later.

"3. Of all the American plantations, his Majesty hath none so apt for the building of shipping as New England, nor none comparably so qualified for breeding of seamen, not only by reason of the natural industry of that people, but principally by reason of their cod and mackerel fisheries; and, in my poor opinion, there is nothing more prejudicial, and in prospect more dangerous to any mother kingdom, than the increase of shipping in her colonies, plantations, and provinces."

"4. The people that evacuate from us to Barbadoes, and the other West

India plantations, as was before hinted, do commonly work one Englishman to ten or eight blacks; and, if we kept the trade of our said plantations entirely to England, England would have no less inhabitants, but rather an increase of people by such evacuation; because that one Englishman, with the ten blacks that work with him, accounting what they eat, use, and wear, would make employment for four men in England, as was said before; whereas, peradventure, of ten men that issue from us to New England and Ireland, what we send to, or receive from them, doth not employ one man in England.

"To conclude this chapter, and to do right to that most industrious English colony, I must confess, that though we lose by their unlimited trade with our foreign plantations, yet we are very great gainers by their direct trade to and from Old England; our yearly exportations of English manufactures, malt, and other goods, from hence thither, amounting, in my opinion, to ten times the value of what is imported from thence; which calculation I do not make at random, but upon mature consideration, and, peradventure, upon as much experience in this very trade as any other person will pretend to; and, therefore, whenever a reformation of our correspondency in trade with that people shall be thought on, it will, in my poor judgment, require great tenderness and very serious circumspection."

Mr. Otis's humor and satire were not idle upon this occasion, but his wit served only to increase the effect of a subsequent, very grave, and serious remonstrance and invective against the detestable principles of the foregoing passages, which he read with regret, but which it was his duty to read, in order to show the temper, the views, and the objects of the knight, which were the same with those of all the acts of trade, anterior and posterior to the writing of this book. And those views, designs, and objects were, to annul all the New England charters, and they were but three, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; to reduce all the colonies to royal governments, to subject them all to the supreme domination of parliament, who were to tax us, without limitation, who would tax us whenever the crown would recommend it, which crown would recommend it, whenever the ministry for the time being should please, and which ministry would please as often as the West India planters and North American governors, crown officers and naval commanders, should solicit more fees, salaries, penalties, and forfeitures.

Mr. Otis had no thanks for the knight for his pharisaical compliment to New England, at the expense of Virginia and other colonies, who, for any thing he knew, were equally meritorious. It was certain, the first settlers of New England were not all godly. But he reprobated in the strongest terms that

language can command, the machiavelian, the jesuitical, the diabolical, and infernal principle that men, colonies, and nations were to be sacrificed, because they were industrious and frugal, wise and virtuous; while others were to be encouraged, fostered, and cherished, because they were pretended to be profligate, vicious, and lazy.

But, my friend, I must quit Josiah Child, and look for others of Mr. Otis's authorities.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 27 July, 1818.

Another author, produced by Mr. Otis, was, "The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain Considered," by Joshua Gee, "a new edition, with many interesting notes and additions, by a merchant," printed in 1767. This new edition, which was printed, no doubt, to justify the ministry in the system they were then pursuing, could not be the edition that Mr. Otis produced in 1761. The advertisement of the editor informs us, that "this valuable treatise has for many years been very scarce, though strongly recommended by the best judges and writers on trade, and universally allowed to be one of the most interesting books on that subject." "The principles upon which it was written, continue, with little variation." But I am fatigued with quotations, and must refer you to the advertisement in the book, which will show, past a doubt, that this was a ministerial republication. The "feelings, the manners and principles, which produced the revolution," will be excited and renovated by the perusal of this book, as much as by that of Sir Josiah Child. I wish I could fill sheets of paper with quotations from it; but this is impossible. If I recommend it to the research, and perusal, and patient thinking of the present generation, it is in despair of being regarded. For who will engage in this dry, dull study? Yet, Mr. Otis labored in it. He asserted and proved, that it was only a reënforcement of the system of Sir Josiah Child, which Gee approved in all things, and even quoted with approbation the most offensive passage in his book, the scurrilous reflections on Virginia and Barbadoes.

Another writer, produced by Mr. Otis, was, "Memoirs and Considerations concerning the Trade and Revenues of the British Colonies in America; with Proposals for rendering those Colonies more beneficial to Great Britain. By John Ashley, Esq."

This book is in the same spirit and system of Josiah Child and Joshua Gee.

Mr. Otis also quoted Postlethwait. But I can quote no more.

If any man of the present age can read these authors and not feel his "feelings, manners, and principles" shocked and insulted, I know not of what stuff he is made. All I can say is, that I read them all in my youth, and that I never read them without being set on fire.

I will, however, transcribe one passage from Ashley, painful as it is. In page 41 he says,

"The laws now in being for the regulation of the plantation trade, namely the 14th of Charles II. ch. 2, sec. 2, 3, 9, 10; 7 and 8 William III. ch. 22, sec. 5, 6; 6 George II. ch. 13, are very well calculated, and, were they put in execution as they ought to be, would in a great measure put an end to the mischiefs here complained of. If the several officers of the customs would see that all entries of sugar, rum and molasses were made conformable to the directions of those laws; and let every entry of such goods distinguish expressly, what are of British growth and produce, and what are of foreign growth and produce; and let the whole cargo of sugar, penneles, rum, spirits, molasses and syrup, be inserted at large in the manifest and clearance of every ship or vessel, under office seal, or be liable to the same duties and penalties as such goods of foreign growth are liable to, this would very much balk the progress of those who carry on this illicit trade, and be agreeable and advantageous to all fair traders.

"And all masters and skippers of boats in all the plantations should give some reasonable security, not to take in any such goods of foreign growth from any vessel not duly entered at the custom-house, in order to land the same, or put the same on board any other ship or vessel, without a warrant or sufferance from a proper officer."

But you will be fatigued with quotations, and so is your friend,

John Adams.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 30 July, 1818.

Another passage, which Mr. Otis read from Ashley, gave occasion, as I suppose, to another memorable and very curious event, which your esteemed pupil and my beloved friend, Judge Minot, has recorded. The passage is in the 42d page.

"In fine, I would humbly propose that the duties on foreign sugar and rum imposed by the before-mentioned act of the 6th of King George II. remain as they are, and also the duty on molasses, so far as concerns the importations into the sugar colonies; but that there be an abatement of the duty on molasses imported into the northern colonies, so far as to give the British planters a reasonable advantage over foreigners, and what may bear some proportion to the charge, risk, and inconvenience of running it in the manner they now do, or after the proposed regulation shall be put in execution. Whether this duty shall be one, two, or three pence, sterling money of Great Britain, per gallon, may be matter of consideration."

Gracious and merciful indeed! The tax might be reduced and made supportable, but not abolished. Oh, no! by no means.

Mr. Hutchinson, however, seized this idea of Ashley, of reducing the tax on molasses from sixpence to threepence, or twopence, or a penny; and the use he made of it you shall learn from your own pupil and my amiable friend, Judge Minot.[1]

"About this time there was a pause in the opposition to the measures of the crown and parliament, which might have given some appearance of the conciliation of parties, but which was more probably owing to the uncertainty of the eventual plan of the ministry, and the proper ground to be chosen for counteracting it. The suppressing of the proposed instructions to the agent by a committee of the House of Representatives indicated that this balance of power there was unsettled. Several circumstances showed a less inflexible spirit than had existed among the leaders. The governor appointed the elder Mr. Otis a justice of the court of common pleas, and judge of probate for the county of Barnstable. The younger wrote a pamphlet on the rights of the British colonies, in which he acknowledged the sovereignty of Parliament, as well as the obligations of the colonies to submit to such burdens as it might lay upon them, until it should be pleased to relieve them, and put the question of taxing America on the footing of the common good."

I beg your attention to Mr. Minot's history, vol. ii., from page 140 to the end of the chapter in page 152. Mr. Minot has

[1] Volume ii. page 142.

endeavored to preserve the dignity, the impartiality, and the delicacy of history. But it was a period of mingled glory and disgrace. But as it is a digression from the subject of Mr. Otis's speech against writs of assistance, I can pursue it no further at present. Mr. Hutchinson seized the idea of reducing the duties. Mr. Otis and his associates seemed to despair of any thing more. Hutchinson was chosen agent, to the utter astonishment of every American out of doors. This was committing the lamb to the kind guardianship of the wolf. The public opinion of all the friends of their country was decided. The public voice was pronounced in accents so terrible, that Mr. Otis fell into a disgrace, from which nothing but *Jemmibullero* saved him. Mr. Hutchinson was politely excused from his embassy, and the storm blew over. Otis, upon whose zeal, energy, and exertions the whole great cause seemed to depend, returned to his duty, and gave entire satisfaction to the end of his political career.

Thus ended the piddling project of reducing the duty on molasses from sixpence a gallon to fivepence, fourpence, threepence, twopence, or a penny. And one half penny a gallon would have abandoned the great principle as much as one pound.

This is another digression from the account of Mr. Otis's argument against writs of assistance and the acts of trade. I have heretofore written you on this subject. The truth, the whole truth, must and will and ought to come out; and nothing but the truth shall appear with the consent of your humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 6 August, 1818.

"Mid the low murmurs of submission, fear and mingled rage, my Hampden raised his voice, and to the laws appealed."

Mr. Otis had reasoned like a philosopher upon the navigation acts, and all the tyrannical acts of Charles II.; but when he came to the revenue laws, the orator blazed out. Poor King William! If thy spirit, whether in heaven or elsewhere, heard James Otis, it must have blushed. A stadtholder of Holland,

by accident or by miracle vested with a little brief authority in England, cordially adopting the system of George Downing, Josiah Child, and Charles II., for the total destruction of that country to which he owed his existence, and all his power and importance in the world; and, what was still worse, joining in the conspiracy with such worthy characters to enslave all the colonies in Europe, Asia, and America, and, indeed, all nations, to the omnipotence of the British Parliament and its royal navy!

The act of Parliament of the 7th and 8th of King William III. was produced, chapter 22d: "An act for preventing frauds, and regulating abuses in the plantation trade." I wish I could transcribe this whole statute, and that which precedes it: "An act for the encouragement of seamen." But who would read them? Yet it behoves our young and old yeomen, mechanics, and laborers, philosophers, politicians, legislators, and merchants to read them. However tedious and painful it may be for you to read, or me to transcribe any part of these dull statutes, we must endure the task, or we shall never understand the American Revolution. Recollect and listen to the preamble of this statute, of the 7th and 8th of William III. chapter 22d.

"Whereas, notwithstanding divers acts made for *the encouragement of the navigation of this kingdom*, and for the better securing and regulating the plantation trade, more especially one act of Parliament made in the 12th year of the reign of the late King Charles II., intituled an act for the increasing of shipping and navigation; another act, made in the 15th year of the reign of his said late Majesty, intituled an act for the encouragement of trade; another act, made in the 22d and 23d years of his said late Majesty's reign, intituled an act to prevent the planting of tobacco in England, and for regulation of the plantation trade; another act, made in the 25th year of the reign of his said late Majesty, intituled an act for the encouragement of the Greenland and Eastland fisheries, and for the better securing the plantation trade, great abuses are daily committed, to the prejudice of the English navigation and the loss of a great part of the plantation trade to this kingdom by the artifice and cunning of ill-disposed persons; for remedy whereof for the future," &c.

Will you be so good, Sir, as to pause a moment on this preamble? To what will you liken it? Does it resemble a great, rich, powerful West India planter, Alderman Beckford, for example, preparing and calculating and writing instructions for his overseers? "You are to have no regard to the health, strength, comfort, natural affections, or moral feelings, or intellectual endowments of my negroes. You are only to consider what subsistence to allow them, and what labor to exact of them

will subserve my interest. According to the most accurate calculation I can make, the proportion of subsistence and labor, which will work them up, in six years upon an average, is the most profitable to the planter. And this allowance, surely, is very humane; for we estimate here the lives of our coal-heavers upon an average at only two years, and our fifty thousand girls of the town at three years at most. And our soldiers and seamen no matter what."

Is there, Mr. Tudor, in this preamble, or in any statute of Great Britain, in the whole book, the smallest consideration of the health, the comfort, the happiness, the wealth, the growth, the population, the agriculture, the manufactures, the commerce, the fisheries of the American people? All these things are to be sacrificed to British wealth, British commerce, British domination, and the British navy, as the great engine and instrument to accomplish all. To be sure, they were apt scholars of their master, Tacitus, whose fundamental and universal principle of philosophy, religion, morality, and policy was, that all nations and all things were to be sacrificed to the grandeur of Rome. Oh! my fellow-citizens, that I had the voice of an archangel to warn you against these detestable principles. The world was not made for you; you were made for the world. Be content with your own rights. Never usurp those of others. What would be the merit and the fortune of a nation that should never do or suffer wrong?

The purview of this statute was in the same spirit with the preamble. Pray read it! Old as you are, you are not so old as I am, and I assure you I have conquered my natural impatience so far as to read it again, after almost sixty years acquaintance with it, in all its horrid deformity.

Every artifice is employed to ensure a rigorous, a severe, a cruel execution of this system of tyranny. The religion, the morality, of all plantation governors, of all naval commanders, of all custom-house officers, if they had any, and all men have some, were put in requisition by the most solemn oaths. Their ambition was enlisted by the forfeiture of their offices; their avarice was secured by the most tempting penalties and forfeitures, to be divided among them. Fine picking, to be sure! Even the lowest, the basest informers were to be made gentlemen of fortune!

I must transcribe one section of this detestable statute, and leave you to read the rest; I can transcribe no more.

The sixth section of this benign law of our glorious deliverer, King William, is as follows:

Section 6. "And for the more effectual preventing of frauds and regulating abuses in the plantation trade in America, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all ships coming into, or going out of any of the said plantations, and lading, or unlading any goods or commodities, whether the same be his Majesty's ships of war or merchant ships, and the masters and commanders thereof, and their ladings, shall be subject and liable to the same rules, visitations, searches, penalties, and forfeitures, as to the entering, landing, and discharging their respective ships and ladings, as ships and their ladings, and the commanders and masters of ships, are subject and liable unto in this kingdom, by virtue of an act of Parliament made in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Charles II., intituled an act for preventing frauds and regulating abuses in his Majesty's customs. And that the officers for collecting and managing his Majesty's revenue, and inspecting the plantation trade, and in any of the said plantations, shall have the same powers and authorities, for visiting and searching of ships, and taking their entries, and for seizing and securing, or bringing on shore any of the goods prohibited to be imported or exported into or out of any the said plantations, or for which any duties are payable, or ought to have been paid, by any of the before mentioned acts, as are provided for the officers of the customs in England by the said last mentioned act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Charles II.; and also to enter houses or warehouses, to search for and seize any such goods; and that all the wharfingers, and owners of keys and wharves, or any lightermen, bargemen, watermen, porters, or other persons assisting in the conveyance, concealment, or rescue of any of the said goods, or in the hindering or resistance of any of the said officers in the performance of their duty, and the boats, barges, lighters, or other vessels employed in the conveyance of such goods, shall be subject to the like pains and penalties, as are provided by the same act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Charles II., in relation to prohibited or unaccustomed goods in this kingdom; and that "*the like assistance*" shall be given to the said officers in the execution of their office, as by the said last mentioned act is provided for the officers in England; and, also, that the said officers shall be subject to the same penalties and forfeitures, for any corruptions, frauds, connivances, or concealments, in violation of any the before mentioned laws, as any officers of the customs in England are liable to, by virtue of the last mentioned act; and, also, that in case any officer or officers in the plantations shall be seized or molested for any thing done in the execution of their office, the said officer shall and may plead the general issue, and shall give this or other custom-acts in evidence, and the judge to allow thereof, have and enjoy the like privileges and advantages, as are allowed by law to the officers of his Majesty's customs in England."

Could it be pretended, that the superior court of judicature, court of assize, and general gaol delivery in the province of

Massachusetts Bay, had all the powers of the court of exchequer in England, and consequently could issue warrants like his Majesty's court of exchequer in England? No custom-house officer dared to say this, or to instruct his counsel to say it. It is true, this court was invested with all the powers of the courts of king's bench, common pleas, and exchequer in England. But this was by a law of the province, made by the provincial legislature, by virtue of the powers vested in them by the charter.

Otis called and called in vain for their warrant from "his Majesty's court of exchequer." They had none, and they could have none from England, and they dared not say, that Hutchinson's court was "his Majesty's court of exchequer." Hutchinson himself dared not say it. The principle would have been fatal to parliamentary pretensions.

This is the second and the last time, I believe, that the word "*assistance*" is employed in any of these statutes. But the words, "writs of assistance," were nowhere to be found; in no statute, no law-book, no volume of entries; neither in Rastell, Coke, or Fitzherbert, nor even in Instructor Clericalis, or Burn's Justice. Where, then, was it to be found? Nowhere but in the imagination or invention of Boston custom-house officers, royal governors, West India planters, or naval commanders.

It was indeed a farce. The crown, by its agents, accumulated construction upon construction, and inference upon inference, as the giants heaped Pelion upon Ossa. I hope it is not impious or profane to compare Otis to Ovid's Jupiter. But

> misso perfregit Olympum
> Fulmine, et excussit subjecto Pelion Ossæ.

He dashed this whole building to pieces, and scattered the pulverized atoms to the four winds; and no judge, lawyer, or crown officer dared to say, why do you so? They were all reduced to total silence.

In plain English, by cool, patient comparison of phraseology of these statutes, their several provisions, the dates of their enactments, the privileges of our charters, the merits of the colonists, &c., he showed the pretensions to introduce the revenue acts, and this arbitrary and mechanical writ of assistance, as an instrument for the execution of them, to be so irrational; by his wit he represented the attempt as so ludicrous and ridiculous, and by his dignified reprobation of so impudent

an attempt to impose on the people of America, he raised such a storm of indignation, that even Hutchinson, who had been appointed on purpose to sanction this writ, dared not utter a word in its favor; and Mr. Gridley himself seemed to me to exult inwardly at the glory and triumph of his pupil.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 11 August, 1818.

The "Defence of the New England Charters" by Jer. Dummer, is both for style and matter one of our most classical American productions. "The feelings, the manners, and principles which produced the Revolution," appear in as vast abundance in this work as in any that I have read. This beautiful composition ought to be reprinted, and read by every American who has learned to read. In pages 30 and 31, this statute of 7th and 8th of King William, chapter 22, section 9th, is quoted, "All laws, by-laws, usages, or customs, at this time, or which hereafter shall be in practice, or endeavored or pretended to be in force or practice in any of the plantations, which are in any wise repugnant to the before mentioned laws or any of them, so far as they do relate to the said plantations, or any of them, or which are any wise repugnant to this present act, or any other law hereafter to be made in this kingdom, so far as such law shall relate to and mention the plantations, are illegal, null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever." This passage Mr. Otis quoted, with a very handsome eulogium of the author and his book. He quoted it for the sake of the rule established in it by Parliament itself for the construction of his own statutes. And he contended that by this rule there could be no pretence for extending writs of assistance to this country. He also alluded to many other passages in this work, very applicable to his purpose, which any man who reads it must perceive, but which I have not time to transcribe.

If you, or your inquisitive and ingenious son, or either of my sons or grandsons or great-grandsons, should ever think of these things, it may not be improper to transcribe from a marginal

note at the end of this statute, an enumeration of the "Further provisions concerning plantations."[1]

The vigilance of the crown officers and their learned counsel on one side, and that of merchants, patriots, and their counsel on the other, produced every thing in any of these statutes which could favor their respective arguments. It would not only be ridiculous in me, but culpable to pretend to recollect all that were produced. Such as I distinctly remember, I will endeavour to introduce to your remembrance and reflections.

Molasses, or melasses, or molosses, for by all these names they are designated in the statutes. By the statute of the second year of our glorious deliverers, King William and Queen Mary, session second, chapter four, section 35. "For every hundred weight of molosses, containing one hundred and twelve pounds, imported from any other place than the English plantations in America, eight shillings over and above what the same is charged with in the book of rates."

The next statute that I recollect at present to have been introduced upon that occasion, was the 6th of George II., chapter 13, "An act for the better securing and encouraging the trade of his Majesty's sugar colonies in America."

Cost what it will, I must transcribe the first section of this statute, with all its parliamentary verbiage. I hope some of my fellow-citizens of the present or some future age will ponder it.

"Whereas, the welfare and prosperity of your Majesty's sugar colonies in America are of the greatest consequence and importance to the trade, navigation, and strength of this kingdom; and whereas, the planters of the said sugar colonies have of late years fallen under such great discouragements, that they are unable to improve or carry on the sugar trade upon an equal footing with the foreign sugar colonies, without some advantage and relief be given to them from Great Britain: For remedy whereof, and for the good and welfare of your Majesty's subjects, we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain, assembled in Parliament, have *given and granted* unto your Majesty the several and respective rates and duties hereinafter mentioned, and in such manner and form as is hereinafter expressed; and do most humbly

[1] II. W. 3, c. 12; 3, 4 of An. c. 5 and 10; 6 of An. c. 30, 8 of An. c. 13; 9 of An. c. 17; 10 An. c. 22 and 26; 4 Geo. 1, c. 11; 5 Geo. 1, c. 12 and 15; 13 Geo. 1, c. 5; 3 Geo. 2, c. 12 and 28; 4 Geo. 2, c. 15; 5 Geo. 2, c. 7 and 9; 6 Geo. 2, c. 15; 8 Geo. 2, c. 13; 8 Geo. 2, c. 19; 12 Geo. 2, c. 30; 15 Geo. 2, c. 31 and 33; 24 Geo. 2, c. 51 and 53; 29 Geo. 2, c. 5 and 35; and 30 Geo. 2, c. 9.

beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the king's most excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the twenty-fifth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-three, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto and for the use of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, upon all rum or spirits of the produce or manufacture of any of the colonies or plantations in America, not in the possession or under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, which at any time or times, within or during the continuance of this act, shall be imported or brought into any of the colonies or plantations in America, which now are, or hereafter may be, in the possession or under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, the sum of ninepence, money of Great Britain, to be paid according to the proportion and value of five shillings and sixpence the ounce in silver, for every gallon thereof, and after that rate for any greater or lesser quantity; and upon all molasses or syrups of such foreign produce or manufacture, as aforesaid, which shall be imported or brought into any of the said colonies of or belonging to his Majesty, the sum of sixpence of like money for every gallon thereof, and after that rate for any greater or lesser quantity; and upon all sugars and paneles of such foreign growth, produce, or manufacture, as aforesaid, which shall be imported into any of the said colonies or plantations of or belonging to his Majesty, a duty after the rate of five shillings of like money for every hundred weight avoirdupois of the said sugar and paneles, and after that rate for a greater or lesser quantity."

Now, Sir, will you be pleased to read Judge Minot's History, vol. ii., from page 137 to 140, ending with these words; "But the strongest apprehensions arose from the publication of the orders for the strict execution of the molasses act, which is said to have caused a greater alarm in the country, than the taking of Fort William Henry did in the year 1757." This I fully believe, and certainly know to be true; for I was an eye and an ear witness to both of these alarms. Wits may laugh at our fondness for molasses, and we ought all to join in the laugh with as much good humor as General Lincoln did. General Washington, however, always asserted and proved, that Virginians loved molasses as well as New Englandmen did. I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes.

Mr. Otis demonstrated how these articles of molasses and sugar, especially the former, entered into all and every branch of our commerce, fisheries, even manufactures and agriculture. He asserted this act to be a revenue law, a taxation law, made by a foreign legislature without our consent, and by a legisla-

ture who had no feeling for us, and whose interest prompted them to tax us to the quick. Pray, Mr. Tudor, calculate the amount of these duties upon molasses and sugar. What an enormous revenue for that age! Mr. Otis made a calculation, and showed it to be more than sufficient to support all the crown officers.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 16 August, 1818.

We cannot yet dismiss this precious statute of the 6th of George II. chapter 13.

The second section I must abridge, for I cannot transcribe much more. It enacts, that all the duties imposed by the first section, shall be paid down in ready money by the importer before landing.

The third section must be transcribed by me or some other person, because it is the most arbitrary among statutes that were all arbitrary, the most unconstitutional among laws which were all unconstitutional.

Section 3d. "And be it further enacted, that in case any of the said commodities shall be landed, or put on shore in any of his Majesty's said colonies or plantations in America, out of any ship or vessel before due entry be made thereof, at the port or place where the same shall be imported, and before the duties by this act charged or chargeable thereupon, shall be duly paid, or without a warrant for the landing and delivering the same, first signed by the collector or impost officer, or other proper officer or officers of the custom or excise, belonging to such port or place respectively, all such goods as shall be so landed or put on shore, or the value of the same, shall be forfeited; and all and every such goods as shall be so landed or put on shore, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act, shall, and may be seized by the governor or commander-in-chief, for the time being, of the colonies or plantations, where the same shall be so landed or put on shore, or any person or persons by them authorized in that behalf, or by warrant of any justice of the peace or other magistrate, (which warrant such justice or magistrate is hereby empowered and required to give upon request,) or by any custom-house officer, impost, or excise officer, or any person or persons him or them accompanying, aiding, and assisting; and *all and every such offence and forfeitures shall, and may be prosecuted for and recovered in any court of admiralty in his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America, (which court of admiralty is hereby authorized, impowered, and required to proceed to hear, and finally determine the same,) or in any court of*

record in the said colonies or plantations, where such offence is committed, at the election of the informer or prosecutor, according to the course and method used and practised there in prosecutions for offences against penal laws relating to customs or excise; and such penalties and forfeitures so recovered there shall be divided as follows, — namely, one third part for the use of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to be applied for the support of the government of the colony or plantation, where the same shall be recovered, one third part to the governor or commander-in-chief of the said colony or plantation, and the other third part to the informer or prosecutor, who shall sue for the same."

Section 5th contains the penalties on persons assisting in such unlawful importation.

Section 6th. "Fifty pound penalty on molesting an officer on his duty. Officer, if sued, may plead the general issue. Fifty pound penalty, an officer conniving at such fraudulent importation.

Section 7th. "One hundred pound penalty, on master of ship, &c., permitting such importation.

Section 8th. "The *onus probandi* in suits to lie on the owners.

Section 12th. "Charge of prosecution to be borne out of the king's part of seizures, forfeitures, and penalties."

George II. was represented and believed in America to be an honest, well-meaning man; and although he consented to this statute and others which he thought sanctioned by his predecessors, especially King William, yet it was reported and understood that he had uniformly resisted the importunities of ministers, governors, planters, and projectors, to induce him to extend the system of taxation and revenue in America, by saying, that "he did not understand the colonies; he wished their prosperity. They appeared to be happy at present; and he would not consent to any innovations, the consequences of which he could not foresee."

Solomon, in all his glory, could not have said a wiser thing. If George III. had adopted this sentiment, what would now be the state of the world? Who can tell, or who can conjecture?

The question now was concerning the designs of a new reign and of a new prince. This young king had now adopted the whole system of his predecessors, Stuarts, Oranges, and Hanoverians, and determined to carry it into execution, right or wrong; and that, by the most tyrannical instruments that ever were invented — writs of assistance. What hope remained for an American who knew, or imagined he knew, the character of the English nation and the character of the American people? To borrow a French word, so many reminiscences rush upon

me, that I know not which to select, and must return for the present to Mr. Otis. By what means this young inexperienced king was first tempted by his ministers to enter with so much spirit into this system, may be hereafter explained.

Mr. Otis analyzed this statute, 6 George II. c. 13, with great accuracy. His calculations may be made by any modern mathematician who will take the pains. How much molasses, for example, was then subject to this tax? Suppose a million gallons, which is far less than the truth. Sixpence a gallon was full one half of the value of the article. It was sold at market for one shilling; and I have known a cargo purchased at a pistareen. The duties on a million gallons would then be twenty-five thousand pounds sterling a year; a fund amply sufficient with the duties on sugars, &c., and more than sufficient, at that time, to pay all the salaries of all the governors upon the continent, and all judges of admiralty too.

Mr. King, formerly of Massachusetts, now of New York, in a late luminous and masterly speech in Senate, page 18, informs us, from sure sources, that "we import annually upwards of six million gallons of West India rum." The Lord have mercy on us! "More than half of which comes from the English colonies. We also import every year nearly seven millions of gallons of molasses; and as every gallon of molasses yields, by distillation, a gallon of rum, the rum imported, added to that distilled from molasses, is probably equal to twelve millions of gallons, which enormous quantity is chiefly consumed, besides whiskey, by citizens of the United States." Again, I devoutly pray, the Lord have mercy on us!

But calculate the revenue, at this day, from this single act of George II. It would be sufficient to bribe any nation less knowing and less virtuous than the people of America, to the voluntary surrender of all their liberties.

Mr. Otis asserted this to be a revenue law; a taxation law; an unconstitutional law; a law subversive of every end of society and government; it was null and void. It was a violation of all the rights of nature, of the English Constitution, and of all the charters and compacts with the colonies; and if carried into execution by writs of assistance and courts of admiralty, would destroy all security of life, liberty, and property. Subjecting all these laws to the jurisdiction of judges of

admiralty, poor dependent creatures, to the forms and course of the civil law, without juries, or any of the open, noble examination of witnesses or publicity of proceedings of the common law, was capping the climax, it was clenching the nail of American slavery.

Mr. Otis roundly asserted, that this statute, and the preceding statute, never could be executed. The whole power of Great Britain would be ineffectual; and by a bold figure, which will now be thought exaggeration, he declared that if the King of Great Britain in person were encamped on Boston common, at the head of twenty thousand men, with all his navy on our coast, he would not be able to execute these laws. They would be resisted or eluded.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 21 August, 1818.

Mr. Otis quoted another author, "The Political and Commercial Works of Charles Davenant, LL. D." vol. ii. Discourse 3. "On the Plantation Trade." I cannot transcribe seventy-six pages, but wish that Americans of all classes would read them. They are in the same strain with Downing, Child, Gee, Ashley, Charles II., James II., William and Mary, William III., Anne, George II., and George III.; all conspiring to make the people of North America hewers of wood and drawers of water to plantation governors, custom-house officers, judges of admiralty, common informers, West India planters, naval commanders, in the first place; and, after all these worthy people should be amply supported, nourished, encouraged, and pampered, if any thing more could be squeezed from the hard earnings of the farmers, the merchants, the tradesmen, and laborers in America, it was to be drawn into the exchequer in England, to aggrandize the British navy.

Mr. Otis proceeded to another species of statutes, relative to our internal policy, even our domestic manufactures and fireside comforts; I might say, our homespun blankets and woollen sheets, so necessary to cover some, if not all of us, in our slumbers in the long nights of our frozen winters. I shall refer to

these statutes as they occur, without any regard to order, and shall not pretend to transcribe any of them.[1]

I cannot search for any more of these mincing laws. Mr. Otis alternately laughed and raged against them all. He said one member of Parliament had said, that a hobnail should not be manufactured in America; and another had moved that Americans should be compelled by act of Parliament to send their horses to England to be shod. He believed, however, that this last was a man of sense, and meant, by this admirable irony, to cast a ridicule on the whole selfish, partial, arbitrary, and contracted system of parliamentary regulations in America.

Another statute there is, and was quoted by Mr. Otis, by which wool was prohibited to be water-borne in America; in consequence of which a fleece of wool could not be conveyed in a canoe across a river or brook, without seizure and forfeiture. But I am wearied to death by digging in this mud; with searching among this trash, chaff, rubbish of acts of Parliament; of that Parliament which declared it had a right to legislate for us, as sovereign, absolute, and supreme, in all cases whatsoever. But I deny that they ever had any right to legislate for us in any case whatsoever. And on this point we are and were at issue before God and the world. These righteous judges have decided the question; and it is melancholy that any Americans should still doubt the equity and wisdom of the decision.

Such were the bowels of compassion, such the tender mercies of our pious, virtuous, our moral and religious mother country towards her most dutiful and affectionate children! Such they are still, and such they will be till the United States shall compel that country to respect this. To this end, poor and destitute as I am, I would cheerfully contribute double my proportion of the expense of building and equipping thirty ships of the line, before the year 1820.

[1] "Furs of the plantations to be brought to Great Britain. 8 Geo. I. c. 15, ss. 24."

"Hats not to be exported from one plantation to another. 5 Geo. II. c. 22."

"Hatters not to have more than two apprentices. 5 Geo. II. c. 22, ss. 7."

"Slitting mills, steel furnaces, &c., not to be erected in the plantations. 23 Geo. II. c. 29, ss. 9."

"No wool, or woollen manufacture of the plantations shall be exported. 10 & 11 Wm. III. c. 10, ss. 19."

"Exporting wool, contrary to the regulations, forfeiture of the ship, &c. 12 Geo. II. c. 21, ss. 11."

Mr. Otis asserted all these acts to be null and void by the law of nature, by the English constitution, and by the American charters, because America was not represented in Parliament. He entered into the history of the charters. James I. and Charles I. could not be supposed to have ever intended that Parliament, more hated by them both than the Pope or the French King, should share with them in the government of colonies and corporations which they had instituted by their royal prerogatives. "Tom, Dick, and Harry were not to censure them and their council." Pym, Hampden, Sir Harry Vane, and Oliver Cromwell did not surely wish to subject a country, which they sought as an asylum, to the arbitrary jurisdiction of a country from which they wished to fly. Charles II. had learned by dismal, doleful experience, that Parliaments were not to be wholly despised. He, therefore, endeavored to associate Parliament with himself in his navigation act, and many others of his despotic projects, even in that of destroying, by his unlimited licentiousness and debauchery, the moral character of the nation. Charles II. courted Parliament as a mistress; his successors embraced her as a wife, at least for the purpose of enslaving America.

Mr. Otis roundly asserted this whole system of parliamentary regulations, and every act of Parliament before quoted, to be illegal, unconstitutional, tyrannical, null, and void. Nevertheless, with all my admiration of Mr. Otis, and enthusiasm for his character, I must acknowledge he was not always consistent in drawing or admitting the necessary consequences from his principles, one of which comprehended them all, to wit, that *Parliament had no authority over America in any case whatsoever.*

But at present we must confine ourselves to his principles and authorities in opposition to the acts of trade and writs of assistance. These principles I perfectly remember. The authorities in detail I could not be supposed to retain; though with recollecting the names, Vattel, Coke, and Holt, I might have found them again by a diligent search. But Mr. Otis himself has saved that trouble, by a publication of his own, which must be the subject of another letter.[1]

[1] The next letter contains nearly the whole of Mr. Otis's memorial, drawn up and sent to Jasper Mauduit by the House of Representatives, in June, 1764, the substance of which has been given by the younger Tudor in his *Life of Otis*, pp. 166 – 169. It is omitted here for want of space.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 10 September, 1818.

The charters were quoted or alluded to by Mr. Otis frequently in the whole course of his argument; but he made them also a more distinct and more solemn head of his discourse. And here, these charters ought to be copied verbatim. But an immense verbiage renders it impossible. Bishop Butler somewhere complains of this enormous abuse of words in public transactions, and John Read and Theophilus Parsons, of Massachusetts, have attempted to reform it. So did James Otis. All with little success. I hope, however, that their examples will be followed, and that common sense in common language will, in time, become fashionable. But the hope must be faint as long as clerks are paid by the line and the number of syllables in a line.

Some passages of these charters must, however, be quoted; and I will endeavor to strip them, as well as I can, of their useless words. They are recited in the charter of King William and Queen Mary, dated the seventh day of October, in the third year of their reign, that is, in 1691.

"Whereas King James I., in the eighteenth year of his reign, did grant to the Council at Plymouth, for the planting and governing New England, all that part of America, from the 40th to the 48th degree of latitude, and from sea to sea, together with all lands, waters, fishings, and all and singular other commodities, *jurisdictions*, royalties, privileges, franchises, and preëminences, both within the said tract of land upon the main, and also within the islands and seas adjoining, to have and hold all, unto the said council, their heirs and successors and assigns forever, to be holden of his said Majesty as of his manor of East Greenwich, in free and common socage, and not in capite, or by knights' service; yielding to the king a fifth part of the ore of gold and silver, *for and in respect of all and all manner of duties, demands, and services whatsoever.*"

But I cannot pursue to the end this infinite series of words. You must read the charter again. For although you have and I have read it fifty times, I believe you will find it, as I do, much stronger in favor of Mr. Otis's argument than I expected or you will expect. I doubt whether you will take the pains to read it again; but your son will, and to him I recommend it.

The Council of Plymouth, on the 19th of March, in the third year of the reign of Charles I., granted to Sir Henry Rosewell

and others, part of New England by certain boundaries, with all the prerogatives and privileges.

King Charles I., on the 4th of March, in the fourth year of his reign, confirmed to Sir Henry Rosewell and others, all those lands before granted to them by the Council of Plymouth. King Charles I. created Sir Henry Rosewell and others, a body corporate and politic. And said body politic did settle a colony, which became very populous.

In 1684, in the 36th year of King William and Queen Mary's dearest uncle, Charles II., a judgment was given in the court of chancery, that the letters-patent of Charles I. should be cancelled, vacated, and annihilated.

The agents petitioned to be reincorporated. I can easily conceive their perplexity, their timidity, their uncertainty, their choice of difficulties, their necessary preference of the least of a multitude of evils, for I have felt them all as keenly as they did.

William and Mary unite Massachusetts, New Plymouth, the Province of Maine and Nova Scotia into one province, to be holden in fee of the manor of East Greenwich, paying one fifth of gold and silver ore.

Liberty of conscience to be granted to all Christians, except papists. Good God! A grant from a king of liberty of conscience! Is it not a grant of the King of kings, which no puppet or *roitelet* upon earth can give or take away?

The general court empowered to erect judicatories and courts of record. The general court empowered to make laws, "*not repugnant to the laws of England.*" Here was an unfathomable gulf of controversy. The grant itself, *of liberty of conscience*, was repugnant to the laws of England. Every thing was repugnant to the laws of England. The whole system of colonization was beyond the limits of the laws of England, and beyond the jurisdiction of their national legislature. The general court is authorized to impose fines, &c., and taxes.

But the fell paragraph of all is the proviso in these words: —

"Provided always, and it is hereby declared, that nothing herein shall extend or to be taken to erect or grant, or allow the exercise of any admiralty court jurisdiction, power, or authority; but that the same shall be, and is hereby reserved to us and our successors, and shall from time to time be erected, granted, and exercised by virtue of commissions to be issued under the great seal of England, or under the seal of the high admiral, or the commissioners for executing the office of high admiral of England."

The history of this court of admiralty would require volumes. Where are its records and its files? Its libels and answers? Its interrogatories and cross-interrogatories? All hurried away to England, as I suppose, never to be seen again in America, nor probably to be inspected in Europe.

The records and files of the court of probate in Boston were transported to Halifax. Judge Foster Hutchinson had the honor to return them after the peace of 1783. But admiralty records have never been restored, as I have heard.

The subject may be pursued hereafter by your servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 13 September, 1818.

It is some consolation to find in the paragraph of the charter, next following the court of admiralty, that nothing in it

"shall in any manner enure, or be taken to abridge, bar, or hinder any of our loving subjects whatsoever, to use and exercise the trade of fishing upon the coasts of New England, but that they and every of them shall have full and free power and liberty to continue and use their said trade of fishing upon the said coast, in any of the seas thereunto adjoining, or any arms of the said seas, or salt water rivers, where they have been wont to fish; and to build and set upon the lands within our said province or colony, lying waste, and not then possessed by particular proprietors, such wharfs, stages, and work-houses, as shall be necessary for the salting, drying, keeping, and packing of their fish, to be taken and gotten upon that coast; and to cut down and take such trees and other materials there growing or being upon any parts or places lying waste, and not then in possession of particular proprietors, as shall be needful for that purpose, and for all other necessary easements, helps, and advantages, concerning the trade of fishing there, in such manner and form as they have been heretofore at any time accustomed to do, without making any wilful waste or spoil, any thing in these presents to the contrary notwithstanding."

Fellow-citizens! Recollect that "this our province or colony" contained the whole of Nova Scotia as well as the "Province of Maine, Massachusetts Bay, and New Plymouth." Will you ever surrender one particle, one iota of this sacred charter right, and still more sacred right of nature, purchase, acquisition, possession, usage, habit, and conquest, let the thunder of British cannon say what it will? I know you will not. I know you

cannot. And if you could be base enough to surrender it, which I know you cannot and never will be, your sons will reclaim it and redemand it at the price of whatever blood or treasure it may cost, and will obtain it, secure it, and command it forever. This pretended *grant* is but an acknowledgment of your antecedent right by nature and by English liberty. You have no power or authority to alienate it. It was granted, or rather acknowledged to your successors and posterity as well as to you, and any cessions you could make would be null and void in the sight of God and all reasonable men.

Mr. Otis descanted largely on these charters. His observations carried irresistible conviction to the minds and hearts of many others as well as to mine, that every one of those statutes from the navigation act to the last act of trade, was a violation of all the charters and compacts between the two countries, was a fundamental invasion of our essential rights, and was consequently null and void; that the legislatures of the colonies, and especially of Massachusetts, had the sole and exclusive authority of legislation and especially of taxation in America.

The indecision and inconsistency, which appears in some of Mr. Otis's subsequent writings is greatly to be regretted and lamented. They resemble those of Colonel Bland, as represented by Mr. Wirt. I wish I had Colonel Bland's pamphlet that I might compare it with some of Mr. Otis's.

I have too many daily proofs of the infirmity of my memory to pretend to recollect Mr. Otis's reasoning in detail. If, indeed, I had a general recollection of any of his positions, I could not express them in that close, concise, nervous, and energetic language, which was peculiar to him, and which I never possessed.

I must leave you, Sir, to make your own observations and reflections upon these charters. But you may indulge me in throwing out a few hints, rather as queries or topics of speculation than as positive opinions. And here, though I see a wide field, I must make it narrow.

1. Mr. Bollan was a kind of learned man, of indefatigable research, and a faithful friend to America; though he lost all his influence when his father-in-law, Governor and General Shirley, went out of circulation. This Mr. Bollan printed a book very early on the "Rights of the Colonies." I scarcely ever knew a book so deeply despised. The English reviewers

would not allow it to be the production of a rational creature. In America itself it was held in no esteem. Otis himself expressed in the House of Representatives, in a public speech, his contempt of it in these words: "Mr. Bollan's book is the strangest thing I ever read. Under the title of 'Rights of the Colonies,' he has employed one third of his work to prove that the world is round; and another, that it turns round; and the last, that the Pope was a devil for pretending to give it to whom he pleased."

All this I regretted. I wished that Bollan had not only been permitted, but encouraged to proceed. There is no doubt he would have produced much in illustration of the ecclesiastical and political superstition and despotism of the ages when colonization commenced and proceeded. But Bollan was discouraged, and ceased from his labors.

What is the idea, Mr. Tudor, of British allegiance? And of European allegiance? Can you, or, rather, will you analyze it? At present, I have demands upon me, which compel me to close abruptly.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 18 September, 1818.

The English doctrine of allegiance is so mysterious, fabulous, and enigmatical, that it is difficult to decompose the elements of which it is compounded. The priests, under the Hebrew economy, especially the sovereign pontiffs, were anointed with consecrated oil, which was poured upon their heads in such profusion that it ran down their beards, and they were thence called "the Lord's anointed." When kings were permitted to be introduced, they were anointed in the same manner by the sovereign pontiff; and they, too, were called "the Lord's anointed." When the pontiffs of Rome assumed the customs, pomps, and ceremonies of the Jewish priesthood, they assumed the power of consecrating things by the same ceremony of "holy oil." The Pope who, as vicar of God, possessed the whole globe of earth in supreme dominion and absolute property, possessed also the power of sending the Holy Ghost

wherever he pleased. To France it pleased his holiness to send him in a phial of oil to Rheims, in the beak of a dove. I have not heard, that my friend, Louis XVIII. has been consecrated at Rheims, by the pouring on of this holy oil; but his worthy elder brother, Louis XVI., was so consecrated at a vast expense of treasure and ridicule. How the holy bottle was conveyed to England, is worth inquiry. But there it is, and is used at every coronation; and is demurely, if not devoutly, shown to every traveller who visits the tower. These ideas were once as firmly established in England as they were in Rome; and no small quantity of the *relics* of them remain to this day. Hence the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and the duties, in subjects, of unlimited submission, passive obedience, and non-resistance, on pain (oh, how can I write it?) of eternal damnation. These doctrines have been openly and boldly asserted and defended, since my memory, in the town of Boston and in the town of Quincy, by persons of no small consideration in the world, whom I could name, but I will not, because their posterity are much softened from this severity.

This indelible character of sovereignty in kings and obedience in subjects still remains. The rights and duties are inherent, unalienable, indefeasible, indestructible, and immortal. Hence the right of a lieutenant or midshipman of a British man-of-war to search all American ships, impress every seaman his judgeship shall decree, by law, and in fact, to be a subject of his king, and compel him to fight, though it may be against his father, brother, or son. My countrymen! Will you submit to those miserable remnants of priestcraft and despotism?

There is no principle of law or government, that has been more deliberately or more solemnly adjudged in Great Britain than that allegiance is not due to the king in his official capacity or political capacity, but merely in his personal capacity. Allegiance to Parliament is nowhere found in English, Scottish, or British laws. What, then, had our ancestors to do with Parliament? Nothing more than with the Jewish Sanhedrim, or Napoleon's literary and scientific Institute at Grand Cairo. They owed no allegiance to Parliament, as a whole or in parts; none to the House of Lords, as a branch of the legislature, nor to any individual peer or number of individuals; none to the House of Commons, as another branch, nor to any individual

commoner or group of commoners. They owed no allegiance to the nation, any more than the nation owed to them; and they had as good and clear a right to make laws for England, as the people of England had to make laws for them.

What right, then, had King James I. to the sovereignty, dominion, or property of North America? No more than King George III. has to Georgium sidus, because Mr. Herschell discovered that planet in his reign. His only color, pretension, or pretext is this. The Pope, as head of the church, was sovereign of the world. Henry VIII. deposed him, became head of the church in England, and consequently became sovereign master and proprietor of as much of the globe as he could grasp. A group of his nobles hungered for immense landed estates in America, and obtained from his *quasi holiness* a large tract. But it was useless and unprofitable to them. They must have planters and settlers. The sincere and conscientious Protestants had been driven from England into Holland, Germany, Switzerland, &c., by the terrors of stocks, pillories, croppings, scourges, imprisonments, roastings, and burnings, under Henry VIII., Elizabeth, Mary, James I., and Charles I. The noblemen and gentlemen of the council of Plymouth wanted settlers for their lands in America, set on foot a negotiation with the persecuted fugitive religionists abroad, promised them liberty of conscience, exemption from all jurisdiction, ecclesiastic, civil, and political, except allegiance to the king, and the tribute, moderate, surely, of one fifth of gold and silver ore. This charter was procured by the council at Plymouth, and displayed off as a lure to the persecuted, fugitive Englishmen abroad; and they were completely taken into the snare, as Charles II. convinced them in the first year of his actual, and the twelfth of his imaginary reign. Sir Josiah Child, enemy as he was, has stated, in the paragraphs quoted from him in a former letter, fairly and candidly the substance of these facts.

Our ancestors had been so long abroad, that they had acquired comfortable establishments, especially in Holland, that singular region of toleration, that glorious asylum for persecuted Huguenots and Puritans, that country where priests have been eternally worrying one another, and alternately teasing the government to persecute their antagonists, but where enlightened statesmen have constantly and intrepidly resisted their wild fanaticism.

The first charter, the charter of James I., is more like a treaty between independent sovereigns than like a charter or grant of privileges from a sovereign to his subjects. Our ancestors were tempted by the prospect and promise of a government of their own, independent in religion, government, commerce, manufactures, and every thing else, excepting one or two articles of trifling importance.

Independence of English church and state, was the fundamental principle of the first colonization, has been its general principle for two hundred years, and now, I hope, is past dispute.

Who, then, was the author, inventor, discoverer of independence? The only true answer must be the first emigrants, and the proof of it is the charter of James I. When we say, that Otis, Adams, Mayhew, Henry, Lee, Jefferson, &c., were authors of independence, we ought to say they were only awakeners and revivers of the original fundamental principle of colonization.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 23 September, 1818.

If, in our search of principles, we have not been able to investigate any moral, philosophical, or rational foundation for any claim of dominion or property in America, in the English nation, their Parliament, or even in their king; if the whole appears a mere usurpation of fiction, fancy, and superstition, what was the right to dominion or property in the native Indians?

Shall we say that a few handfuls of scattering tribes of savages have a right of dominion and property over a quarter of this globe capable of nourishing hundreds of millions of happy human beings? Why had not Europeans a right to come and hunt and fish with them?

The Indians had a right to life, liberty, and property in common with all men; but what right to dominion or property beyond these? Every Indian had a right to his wigwam, his armor, his utensils; when he had burned the woods about him,

and planted his corn and beans, his squashes and pompions, all these were his undoubted right; but will you infer from this, that he had right of exclusive dominion and property over immense regions of uncultivated wilderness that he never saw, that he might have the exclusive privilege of hunting and fishing in them, which he himself never expected or hoped to enjoy?

These reflections appear to have occurred to our ancestors, and their general conduct was regulated by them. They do not seem to have had any confidence in their charter, as conveying any right, except against the king who signed it. They considered the right to be in the native Indians. And, in truth, all the right there was in the case lay there. They accordingly respected the Indian wigwams and poor plantations, their clam-banks and muscle-banks and oyster-banks, and all their property.

Property in land, antecedent to civil society, or the social compact, seems to have been confined to actual possession and power of commanding it. It is the creature of convention, of social laws and artificial order. Our ancestors, however, did not amuse, nor puzzle themselves with these refinements. They considered the Indians as having rights; and they entered into negotiations with them, purchased and paid for their rights and claims, whatever they were, and procured deeds, grants, and quitclaims of all their lands, leaving them their habitations, arms, utensils, fishings, huntings, and plantations. There is scarcely a litigation at law concerning a title to land that may not be traced to an Indian deed. I have in my possession, somewhere, a parchment copy of a deed of Massasoit,[1] of the township of Braintree incorporated by the legislature in one thousand six hundred and thirty-nine. And this was the general practice through the country, and has been to this day through the continent. In short, I see not how the Indians could have been treated with more equity or humanity than they have been in general in North America. The histories of Indian wars have not been sufficiently regarded.

When Mr. Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts Bay first

[1] Slight inaccuracies occur here. The deed is a deed of release, in 1665, from Wampatuck, the son of Chickatabut, deceased, of all lands in Braintree, with certain exceptions therein named, granted by his predecessors. The township was incorporated in 1640.

appeared, one of the most common criticisms upon it was the slight, cold, and unfeeling manner in which he passed over the Indian wars. I have heard gentlemen the best informed in the history of the country say, "he had no sympathy for the sufferings of his ancestors. Otherwise he could not have winked out of sight one of the most important, most affecting, afflicting, and distressing branches of the history of his country."

There is somewhere in existence, as I hope and believe, a manuscript history of Indian wars, written by the Reverend Samuel Niles, of Braintree. Almost sixty years ago, I was an humble acquaintance of this venerable clergyman, then, as I believe, more than fourscore years of age. He asked me many questions, and informed me, in his own house, that he was endeavoring to recollect and commit to writing a history of Indian wars, in his own time, and before it, as far as he could collect information. This history he completed and prepared for the press; but no printer would undertake it, or venture to propose a subscription for its publication. Since my return from Europe, I inquired of his oldest son, the Honorable Samuel Niles, of Braintree, on a visit he made me at my own house, what was become of that manuscript. He laughed, and said it was still safe in the till of a certain trunk; but no encouragement had ever appeared for its publication. Ye liberal Christians! Laugh not at me, nor frown upon me, for thus reviving the memory of your once formidable enemy. I was then no more of a disciple of his theological science than ye are now. But I then revered and still revere the honest, virtuous, and pious man. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.* And his memorial of facts might be of great value to this country.[1]

What infinite pains have been taken and expenses incurred in treaties, presents, stipulated sums of money, instruments of agriculture, education, what dangerous and unwearied labors, to convert these poor, ignorant savages to Christianity! And, alas! with how little success! The Indians are as bigoted to their religion as the Mahometans are to their Koran, the Hindoos to their Shaster, the Chinese to Confucius, the Romans to their saints and angels, or the Jews to Moses and the Prophets. It is a principle of religion, at bottom, which inspires the Indians

[1] A part of this history has been published by the Historical Society of Massachusetts, in their Transactions, vol. vi. of the third series.

with such an invincible aversion both to civilization and Christianity. The same principle has excited their perpetual hostilities against the colonists and the independent Americans.

If the English nation, their Parliaments, and all their kings, have appeared to be totally ignorant of all these things, or at least to have vouchsafed no consideration upon them; if we, good, patriotic Americans, have forgotten them, Mr. Otis had not. He enlarged on the merits of our ancestors in undertaking so perilous, arduous, and almost desperate an enterprise, in disforesting bare creation, in conciliating and necessarily contending with Indian natives, in purchasing rather than conquering a quarter of the globe at their own expense, at the sweat of their own brows, at the hazard and sacrifice of their own lives, without the smallest aid, assistance, or comfort from the government of England, or from England itself as a nation; on the contrary, constant jealousy, envy, intrigue against their charter, their religion, and all their privileges. Laud, the pious tyrant, dreaded them, as if he foresaw they would overthrow his religion.

Mr. Otis reproached the nation, parliaments, and kings, with injustice, ungenerosity, ingratitude, cruelty, and perfidy in all their conduct towards this country, in a style of oratory that I never heard equalled in this or any other country.[1]

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Monticello, 13 November, 1818.

The public papers, my dear friend, announce the fatal event,[2] of which your letter of October 20th had given me ominous

[1] By comparison of this sketch of Mr. Otis's speech with that taken at the time, vol. ii. pp. 521 – 525, as well as with Mr. Otis's published writings, it is difficult to resist the belief that Mr. Adams insensibly infused into this work much of the learning and of the breadth of views belonging to himself. It looks a little as Raphael's labor might be supposed to look, if he had undertaken to show how Perugino painted. It has a historical value independently of the generous endeavor to do justice to a man who had, at the moment, fallen into discredit and oblivion, most undeservedly. Later historians are giving him his fitting position.

[2] The death of Mrs. Adams.

foreboding. Tried myself in the school of affliction, by the loss of every form of connection which can rive the human heart, I know well, and feel what you have lost, what you have suffered, are suffering, and have yet to endure. The same trials have taught me that, for ills so immeasurable, time and silence are the only medicines. I will not, therefore, by useless condolences open afresh the sluices of your grief, nor, although mingling sincerely my tears with yours, will I say a word more, where words are vain, but that it is of some comfort to us both that the term is not very distant, at which we are to deposit in the same cerement our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved and lost, and whom we shall still love and never lose again. God bless you and support you under your heavy affliction.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 8 December, 1818.

Your letter of November 13th gave great delight, not only by the divine consolation it afforded me under my great affliction, but as it gave me full proof of your restoration to health.

While you live, I seem to have a bank at Monticello, on which I can draw for a letter of friendship and entertainment, when I please.

I know not how to prove, physically, that we shall meet and know each other in a future state; nor does revelation, as I can find, give us any positive assurance of such a felicity. My reasons for believing it, as I do most undoubtedly, are that I cannot conceive such a being could make such a species as the human, merely to live and die on this earth. If I did not believe a future state, I should believe in no God. This universe, this all, this τὸ πᾶν, would appear, with all its swelling pomp, a boyish fire-work. And, if there be a future state, why should the Almighty dissolve forever all the tender ties which unite us so delightfully in this world, and forbid us to see each other in the next?

Trumbull, with a band of associates, drew me, by the cords of old friendship, to see his picture, on Saturday, where I got a great cold. The air of Faneuil Hall is changed. I have not been used to catch cold there.

Sick or well, the friendship is the same of your old acquaintance.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 9 February, 1819.

In your last letter you consider me in debt, and I will not dispute it.

You seem to wish me to write something to diminish the fame of Sam Adams, to show that he was not a man of profound learning, a great lawyer, a man of vast reading, a comprehensive statesman. In all this, I shall not gratify you.

Give me leave to tell you, my friend, that you have conceived prejudices against that great character; and I wonder not at it. At present, I shall make only one observation. Samuel Adams, to my certain knowledge, from 1758 to 1775, that is, for seventeen years, made it his constant rule to watch the rise of every brilliant genius, to seek his acquaintance, to court his friendship, to cultivate his natural feelings in favor of his native country, to warn him against the hostile designs of Great Britain, and to fix his affections and reflections on the side of his native country. I could enumerate a list, but I will confine myself to a few. John Hancock, afterwards President of Congress and Governor of the State; Dr. Joseph Warren, afterwards Major-General of the militia of Massachusetts, and the martyr of Bunker's Hill; Benjamin Church, the poet and the orator, once a pretended, if not a real patriot, but, afterwards, a monument of the frailty of human nature; Josiah Quincy, the Boston Cicero, the great orator in the body meetings, the author of the Observations on the Boston Port bill, and of many publications in the newspapers. I will stop here for the present. And, now, I will take the liberty of perfect friendship to add, that, if your Judge Minot, your Fisher Ames, or your honorable senator, Josiah Quincy the third, had been as intimately acquainted

with Samuel Adams, as Hancock, Warren, and Josiah Quincy the second, they would have been as ardent patriots as he was. If Samuel Adams was not a Demosthenes in oratory, nor had the learning of a Mansfield in law, or the universal history of a Burke, he had the art of commanding the learning, the oratory, the talents, the diamonds of the first water that his country afforded, without anybody's knowing or suspecting he had it, but himself, and a very few friends.

I have much more to say concerning Samuel Adams, but I cannot write, and I am exhausted with dictating, and must content myself with adding that I am, and, I believe, ever shall be, your affectionate friend.

TO WILLIAM WILLIS.

Quincy, 21 February, 1819.

I thank you for your address to the New Bedford Auxiliary Society for the suppression of Intemperance, which I have read with pleasure and edification. It abounds in ingenuity and information; it is eloquent and pathetic, it is pious and virtuous; it addresses itself to the understanding and the heart. A drunkard is the most selfish being in the universe; he has no sense of modesty, shame, or disgrace; he has no sense of duty, or sympathy of affection with his father or mother, his brother or sister, his friend or neighbor, his wife or children, no reverence for his God, no sense of futurity in this world or the other. All is swallowed up in the mad, selfish joy of the moment. Is it not humiliating that Mahometans and Hindoos should put to shame the whole Christian world by their superior examples of temperance? Is it not degrading to Englishmen and Americans that they are so infinitely exceeded by the French in this cardinal virtue? And is it not mortifying beyond all expression that we, Americans, should exceed all other and millions of people in the world in this degrading, beastly vice of intemperance?

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 23 February, 1819.

As you were so well acquainted with the philosophers of France, I presume the name and character of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse is not unknown to you.

I have almost put out my eyes by reading two volumes of her letters, which, as they were printed in 1809, I presume you have read long ago. I confess I have never read any thing with more ennui, disgust, and loathing; the eternal repetition of *mon dieu* and *mon ami, je vous aime, je vous aime éperdument, je vous aime à la folie, je suis au désespoir, j'espère la mort, je suis morte, je prend l'opium*, &c., &c.

She was constantly in love with other women's husbands, constantly violating her fidelity to her own keepers, constantly tormented with remorse and regrets, constantly wishing for death, and constantly threatening to put herself to death, &c., &c., &c. Yet this great lady was the confidential friend of M. Turgot, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Duchess d'Enville, M. Condorcet, the only lady who was admitted to the dinners which Madame Geoffrin made for the literati of France and the world, the intimate friend of Madame Boufflers, the open, acknowledged mistress of the great D'Alembert, and much admired by Marmontel.

If these letters and the fifteen volumes of De Grimm are to give me an idea of the amelioration of society, and government, and manners in France, I should think the age of reason had produced nothing much better than the Mahometans, the Mamelukes, or the Hindoos, or the North American Indians have produced, in different parts of the world.

Festina lente, my friend, in all your projects of reformation. Abolish polytheism, however, in every shape, if you can, and unfrock every priest who teaches it, if you can.

To compensate, in some measure, for this crazy letter, I inclose to you Mr. Pickering's[1] Essay on the Pronunciation of the Greek Language, which, very probably, you have received

[1] Mr. John Pickering, distinguished for his learning and his literary pursuits in paths little explored in America, in his day.

from various quarters before now, and with it, I pray you to accept assurances of the unabated friendship of your humble servant.

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 7 March, 1819.

On the 20th of January, 1768, the House of Representatives appointed a committee to prepare a petition to the king, and letters to his ministers, and a letter to the agent. Knowing that such a committee was appointed, and that they were busily employed in preparing those representations, and meeting Mr. Otis one morning, I asked him, "How do you proceed with your petitions and letters?" He answered, "I have drawn them all up, and given them to Sam to *quieu whew* them." Whether this word is Arabic or Seminole, I know not. I believe it was an oddity of his own invention. These letters were printed in London, by Almon, in 1768, in a pamphlet. These letters, from beginning to end, demonstrate the rough cast of James Otis and the polish and burnish of Samuel Adams. The first is a petition to the king. In every sentence of this petition the hand of Otis is visible; in page 8, in this paragraph, particularly.

"With great sincerity permit us to assure your Majesty, that your subjects of this province ever have and still continue to acknowledge your Majesty's high court of Parliament the supreme legislative power of the whole empire; the superintending authority of which is clearly admitted in all cases that can consist with the fundamental rights of nature and the constitution, to which your Majesty's happy subjects in all parts of your empire conceive they have a just and equitable claim."

The next letter is to the Earl of Shelburne. This letter, also, in every paragraph, demonstrates the hand of Mr. Otis. In page 15:—

"It is the glory of the British constitution that it has its foundation in the law of God and nature. It is essentially a natural right, that a man shall quietly enjoy and have the sole disposal of his own property. This right is engrafted into the British constitution, and is familiar to the American subjects; and your lordship will judge whether any necessity can render it just and equitable in

the nature of things, that the supreme legislative of the empire should impose duties, subsidies, talliages, and taxes, internal or external, for the sole purpose of raising a revenue, upon subjects that are not and cannot, considering their local circumstances, by any possibility be equally represented, and consequently whose consent cannot be had in Parliament. The security of right and property is the great end of government. Surely, then, such measures as tend to render right and property precarious, tend to destroy both property and government; for these must stand or fall together. Property is admitted to have an existence in the savage state of nature; and, if it is necessary for the support of savage life, it becomes by no means less so in civil society. The House entreat your lordship to consider whether a colonist can be conceived to have any property which he may call his own, if it may be granted away by any other body without his consent; and they submit to your lordship's judgment, whether this was not actually done, when the act for granting to his Majesty certain duties for paper, glass, and other articles, for the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue in America, was made. It is the judgment of Lord Coke, that the Parliament of Great Britain cannot tax Ireland *quia milites ad parliamentum non mittant;* and Sir William Jones, an eminent jurist, declared it as his opinion to King Charles II., that he could no more grant a commission to levy money on his subjects in Jamaica, without their consent by an assembly, than they could discharge themselves from their allegiance to the crown."

I have selected this paragraph merely as a specimen; but every other sentence in the letter carries demonstrative marks of the hand of James Otis. The next letter was to General Conway, dated February 18th, 1768. This letter, also, bears indelible marks of the hand of James Otis. Page 22d: —

"The House is at all times ready to recognize his Majesty's high court of Parliament, the supreme legislative power over the whole empire. Its superintending authority in all cases consistent with the fundamental rules of the constitution, is as clearly admitted by his Majesty's subjects in this province as by those within the realm."

This paragraph is an infallible stamp of the then character of James Otis's opinions. This opinion was not mine. I could not and would not have consented to it, for long before this time I was fully convinced that Parliament had no legal and constitutional authority over us, in any case whatsoever. Page 23: —

"It is the glory of the British prince and the happiness of all his subjects, that their constitution hath its foundation in the immutable laws of nature, and as the supreme legislative, as well as the supreme executive, derives its authority from that constitution, it should seem that no laws can be made or executed that are repugnant to any essential law in nature. Hence, a British subject is happily distinguished from the subjects of many other States, in a just and well-grounded opinion of his own safety, which is the perfection of political liberty."

This whole paragraph is James Otis in perfection; the sense of every line of it is his. It may be thought a minute criticism, but it is characteristic and infallible. Otis and the majority of the committee derived all authority from the constitution. Samuel Adams would have derived it only from the people; the people with him were every thing, and constitutions nothing. Otis and Adams, however, might have agreed in expression, for it is certain that no constitution can be made by any other power than the people. The letter proceeds, page 23: —

"It is acknowledged to be an unalterable law in nature, that a man should have the free use and sole disposal of the fruit of his honest industry, subject to no control. The equity of this principle seems to have been too obvious to be misunderstood by those who framed the constitution, into which it is engrafted as an established law. It is conceived that this principle gave rise, in early time, to a representation in Parliament, where every individual in the realm has since been and is still considered by acts of Parliament as present by himself or by his representative of his own free election; consequently the aid afforded there to the sovereign is not in the nature of a tribute, but the free and voluntary gift of all."

All the subsequent paragraphs of this letter carry indelible marks of Otis's hand, smoothed with the oily brush of Sam Adams. The next letter is to the Marquis of Rockingham, January 22d, 1768. Page 28: —

"Your lordship is pleased to say, that you will not adopt a system of arbitrary rule over the Colonies, nor do otherwise than strenuously resist, where attempts shall be made to throw off that dependency to which the Colonies ought to submit. And your lordship, with great impartiality, adds, 'not only for the advantage of Great Britain, but for their own real happiness and safety.' This House, my Lord, have the honor heartily to join with you in sentiment; and they speak the language of their constituents. So sensible are they of their happiness and safety, in their union with and dependence upon the mother country, that they would by no means be inclined to accept of an independency, if offered to them."

This was the sentiment of James Otis and of a majority of that committee and of their constituents; but whether it was cordially the sentiment of Sam Adams at that time, I submit to the judgment of his grandson. I could not have consented to that paragraph without limitations and explanations. If we could have been sure of continuing our old connection, I should have preferred it to independence; but rather than submit to the sovereign authority of Parliament, I would not only have

accepted independence, if offered, but would have fought for it, if refused. Page 29th: —

"My Lord, the superintending power of that high court" (the Parliament) "over all his Majesty's subjects in the empire, and in all cases which can consist with the fundamental rules of the constitution, was never questioned in this province, nor, as the House conceive, in any other. But, in all free States the constitution is fixed. It is from thence that the supreme legislative, as well as the supreme executive, derives its authority; neither, then, can break through the fundamental rules of the constitution without destroying their own foundation. It is humbly conceived, that all his Majesty's happy subjects, in every part of his wide extended dominions, have a just and equitable claim to the rights of that constitution, upon which government itself is formed, and by which sovereignty and allegiance are ascertained and limited. Your lordship will allow us to say, that it is an essential right of a British subject, engrafted into the constitution, or, if your lordship will admit the expression, a sacred and unalienable natural right, quietly to enjoy and have the sole disposal of his own property."

This and all the subsequent paragraphs in this letter are but abridgments of the sentiments uttered by Otis in 1761, in his arguments against the execution of the dormant acts of trade. The next letter is to Lord Camden, page 33: —

"If in all free States the constitution is fixed, and the supreme legislative power of the nation from thence derives its authority, can that power overleap the bounds of the constitution without subverting its own foundation? If the remotest subjects are bound by the ties of allegiance, which this people and their forefathers have ever acknowledged, are they not by the rules of equity entitled to all the rights of that constitution, which ascertains and limits both sovereignty and allegiance? If it is an essential, unalterable right in nature, engrafted into the British constitution as a fundamental law, and ever held sacred and irrevocable by the subjects within the realm, that what is a man's own is absolutely his own and that no man hath a right to take it from him without his consent, may not the subjects of this province, with a decent firmness, which has always distinguished the happy subjects of Britain, plead and maintain this natural constitutional right? The superintending authority of his Majesty's high court of Parliament over the whole empire, in all cases which can consist with the fundamental rights of the constitution, was never questioned in this province, nor, as this House conceive, in any other."

Here, Mr. Otis, Mr. Adams, and the whole committee, are undoubtedly in an error; they made too ample a concession. The authority of Parliament had always been questioned and always disputed until the year 1675, when it was denied not only by Governor Leverett, but the legislature of the colony, and it was ever after questioned by the best informed

and thinking men both in this province and in many others, if not in all: —

"But they entreat your lordship's reflection one moment on an act of Parliament passed the last session, and another in the fourth of his present Majesty's reign, both imposing duties on his subjects in America, which, as they are imposed for the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue, are, in effect, taxes. The position, that taxation and representation are inseparable, is founded on the immutable laws of nature; but the Americans had no representation in the Parliament, when they were taxed; are they not then unfortunate in these instances, in having that separated, which God and nature had joined?"

Every other paragraph in the letter is demonstrative of the hand of Otis. Page 36: —

"A power without a check is always unsafe, and in some future time may introduce an absolute government into America. The judges of the land here do not hold their commissions during good behavior; is it not, then, justly to be apprehended that, at so great a distance from the throne, the fountain of national justice, with salaries altogether independent of the people, an arbitrary rule may take effect, which shall deprive a bench of justice of its glory and the people of their security?"

The next letter is to the Earl of Chatham, February 2d, 1768. This is principally a letter of compliment, but it may not be amiss to quote a sentence or two. Page 38: —

"It must afford the utmost satisfaction to the distressed colonists to find your lordship so explicitly declaring your sentiments in that grand principle in nature, that 'what a man hath honestly acquired, is absolutely and uncontrollably his own.' This principle is established as a fundamental rule in the British constitution, which eminently hath its foundation in the laws of nature; and consequently it is the indisputable right of all men, more especially of a British subject, to be present in person, or by representation, in the body where he is taxed. But, however fixed your lordship and some others may be in this cardinal point, it is truly mortifying to many of his Majesty's free and loyal subjects that even in the British Parliament, that sanctuary of liberty and justice, a different sentiment seems of late to have prevailed."

The rest of the letter is but a repetition of the complaints in former letters, and a representation of the merits of the colonies in all former times in the public service. The next is a letter to the commissioners of the treasury. This, in general, is a repetition of the substance of the former letters, a little varied in expression. Page 45: — They complain of the duties levied by the offensive acts of Parliament, as imposed with the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue, and to be applied in the first place for the making a more certain and adequate provision

for the charge of the administration of justice and support of civil government, &c., &c.

The next letter is a circular letter "to the speakers of the respective Houses of Representatives and Burgesses on this continent; a copy of which was also sent to Dennis de Berdt, Esquire, their agent, by order of the House, that he might make use of it, if necessary, to prevent any misrepresentation of it in England." This letter is but a kind of recapitulation of the former letter.

The letter to the Earl of Shelburne, which follows, is dated January 22d, 1768. This letter relates to proceedings between Governor Bernard and the House, relative to a letter of his lordship which the House had been permitted to hear, but not to see, and relative to charges against them, which had been supposed to have been preferred by Bernard himself. I shall quote but one paragraph from their vindication of themselves for having left out the judges from their legislative council.

"The non-election of several gentlemen of distinguished character and station was by no means the effect of party prejudice, private resentment, or motives still more blamable, but the result of calm reflection upon the danger that might accrue to our excellent constitution and the liberties of the people from too great a union of the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers of government, which, in the opinion of the greatest writers, ought always to be kept separate; nor was this a new opinion, formed at a certain period, but it has been the prevailing sentiment of many of the most sensible and unexceptionable gentlemen in the province for many years past, upon principles which your lordship's thorough knowledge of the constitution and the just balance of the several powers of government, this House is assured, will justify."

The last letter, dated January 12th, 1768, is to Dennis de Berdt, Esq., agent for the House. Page 59:—

"The fundamental rules of the constitution are the grand security of all British subjects; and it is a security, which they are all equally entitled to, in all parts of his Majesty's extended dominions. The supreme legislative in every free State derives its power from the constitution, by the fundamental rules of which it is bounded and circumscribed. As a legislative power is essentially requisite, where any powers of government are exercised, it is conceived the several legislative bodies in America were erected, because their existence and the free exercise of their power, within their several limits, are essentially important and necessary to preserve to his Majesty's subjects in America the advantages of the fundamental laws of the constitution. When we mention the rights of the subjects in America, and the interest we have in the British constitution, in common with all other British subjects, we cannot justly be suspected of the most distant thought of an independency on Great Britain. Some, we

know, have imagined this of the colonists; and others, perhaps, may have industriously propagated it, to raise groundless and unreasonable jealousies of them; but it is so far from the truth, that we apprehend the colonies would refuse it, if offered to them, and would even deem it the greatest misfortune to be obliged to accept it. They are far from being insensible of their happiness in being connected with the mother country, and of the mutual benefits derived from it to both," &c. &c.

Here, Mr. Tudor, let me pause. Whatever Mr. J. Otis or Mr. S. Adams, or Colonel Otis, or Major Hawley, or Mr. Samuel Dexter, the illustrious committee who sanctioned these letters, thought at that time, I could not have given my unqualified assent to the foregoing paragraph, for I certainly had distant thoughts of an independency of Great Britain, long before I ever saw the face of any one of that committee, even as long ago as the years 1755, 56 and 57. When living at Worcester, and knowing the miserable conduct of Shirley, Braddock, Loudon, Webb, and others, in conducting the war and managing American affairs, I *ardently* wished that we had nothing to do with Great Britain, and firmly believed that the American colonies, if left to themselves, and suffered to unite, might defend themselves against the French, much better without Great Britain than with her. Now we will proceed with our quotations from the letter.

"It is the glory of the British constitution that it hath its foundation in the law of God and nature. It is an essential natural right that a man shall quietly enjoy and have the disposal of his own property. This right is adopted into the constitution. This natural and constitutional right is so familiar to the American subjects, that it would be difficult, if possible, to convince them that any necessity can render it just, equitable, and reasonable, in the nature of things, that the Parliament should impose duties, subsidies, talliages, and taxes upon them, internal or external, for the sole purpose of raising a revenue. The reason is obvious; because they cannot be represented, and, therefore, their consent cannot be constitutionally had in Parliament."

They then remark upon the declaratory act, and the subsequent revenue acts, which I pass over, to page 63: —

"It is observable, that though many have disregarded life and contemned liberty, yet there are few men who do not agree, that property is a valuable acquisition, which ought to be held sacred. Many have fought and bled and died for this, who have been insensible to all other obligations. Those who ridicule the ideas of right and justice, faith and truth among men, will put a high value upon money. Property is admitted to have an existence, even in the savage state of nature. The bow, the arrow, and the tomahawk, the hunting

and the fishing ground, are species of property as important to an American savage, as pearls, rubies, and diamonds are to the Mogul, or a Nabob in the east, or the lands, tenements, hereditaments, messuages, gold and silver of the Europeans. And, if property is necessary to the support of savage life, it is by no means less so in civil society. The Utopian schemes of levelling, and a community of goods, are as visionary and impracticable as those which vest all property in the crown, are arbitrary, despotic, and, in our government, unconstitutional. Now, what property can the colonists be conceived to have, if their money may be granted away by others, without their consent?"

To do justice to this letter, I must transcribe every word of it; but I have already, you will think, transcribed too much, though every line is a diamond. We will pass to page 65: —

"Our ancestors were in one respect not in so melancholy a situation as we, their posterity, are. In those times, the crown and the ministers of the crown, without the intervention of Parliament, demolished charters, and levied taxes on the colonies, at pleasure. Governor Andros, in the time of James II., declared that wherever an Englishman sets his foot, all he hath is the king's. And Dudley declared at the council board, and even on the sacred seat of justice, that the privilege of Englishmen not to be taxed without their consent, and the laws of England, would not follow them to the ends of the earth. It was also in those days declared in council, that the king's subjects in New England did not differ much from slaves, and that the only difference was, that they were not bought and sold. But there was even in those times an excellent attorney-general, Sir W. Jones, who was of another mind, and told king James that he could no more grant a commission to levy money on his subjects in Jamaica, though a conquered island, without their consent, by an assembly, than they could discharge themselves from their allegiance to the English crown. But the misfortune of the colonists at present is, that they are taxed by Parliament without their consent. This, while the Parliament continues resolved to tax us, will ever render our case, in one respect, more deplorable and remediless, under the best of kings, than that of our ancestors was, under the worst. They found relief by the interposition of Parliament; but, by the intervention of that very power we are taxed, and can appeal for relief from their final decision to no power on earth; for there is no power on earth above them."

For the rest of this admirable letter, I must refer you to the printed volume in which it is found, rich as it is, both in style and matter. Upon an attentive and careful review of all these letters, I can find nothing to ascribe to Mr. Adams. Every sentence and every word of them appears to me to be Mr. Otis's. They are but an abridgment, a concise compendium of Mr. Otis's argument against the execution of the acts of trade in 1761, seven years before these letters were written. If Mr. Otis himself had not informed me that he had given them all to Mr. Sam Adams to be revised, I should not have

suspected that Mr. Adams had any thing to do in the composition of them; for Mr. Otis was as severe a critic, and as capable of writing well, as any man of that time. He only did not love to revise, correct, and polish. If Mr. Adams had really any share in these compositions, it must have been only in the collocation of words. "Proper words in proper places," is a definition of style. Swift, in these four words, has expressed the essence of a learned, acute, and celebrated treatise of Dionysius Halicarnassensis concerning the arrangement of words. This arrangement of words is indeed a matter of great consequence. Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon, owed more their fame to this than to their accuracy or impartiality; woe to the writer in this age of the world, who is rash enough to despise or neglect it!

TO JOHN TAYLOR, OF CAROLINE.

Quincy, 12 March, 1819.

Worthy Sir, — The painful difficulty of holding a pen, which has been growing upon me for many years, and now, in the middle of the eighty-fourth year of my age, has become insupportable, must be my apology, not only for terminating my strictures upon your Inquiry, but for the necessity I am now under of borrowing another hand to acknowledge the receipt of your polite and obliging letter of February 20th.[1] I have never had but one opinion concerning banking, from the institution of the first, in Philadelphia, by Mr. Robert Morris and Mr. Gouverneur Morris, and that opinion has uniformly been that the banks have done more injury to the religion, morality, tranquillity, prosperity, and even wealth of the nation, than they can have done or ever will do good. They are like party spirit, the delusion of the many for the interest of a few. I have always thought that Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Locke, a hundred years ago, at least, had scientifically and demonstratively settled all questions of this kind. Silver and gold are but commodities, as much as wheat and lumber; the merchants who study the necessity, and feel out the wants of the community, can always

[1] This letter is printed in vol. iii. p. 58, note.

import enough to supply the necessary circulating currency, as they can broadcloth or sugar, the trinkets of Birmingham and Manchester, or the hemp of Siberia. I am old enough to have seen a paper currency annihilated at a blow in Massachusetts, in 1750, and a silver currency taking its place immediately, and supplying every necessity and every convenience. I cannot enlarge upon this subject; it has always been incomprehensible to me, that a people so jealous of their liberty and property as the Americans, should so long have borne impositions with patience and submission, which would have been trampled under foot in the meanest village in Holland, or undergone the fate of Wood's halfpence in Ireland. I beg leave to refer you to a work which Mr. Jefferson has sent me, translated by himself from a French manuscript of the Count Destutt Tracy. His chapter "of money" contains the sentiments that I have entertained all my lifetime. I will quote only a few lines from the analytical table, page 21. "It is to be desired, that coins had never borne other names than those of their weight, and that the arbitrary denominations, called moneys of account, as £, *s.*, *d.*, &c., had never been used. But when these denominations are admitted and employed in transactions, to diminish the quantity of metal to which they answer, by an alteration of the real coins, is to steal; and it is a theft which even injures him who commits it. A theft of greater magnitude and still more ruinous, is the making of paper money; it is greater, because in this money there is absolutely no real value; it is more ruinous, because, by its gradual depreciation during all the time of its existence, it produces the effect which would be produced by an infinity of successive deteriorations of the coins. All these iniquities are founded on the false idea, that money is but a sign." Permit me to recommend this volume to your attentive perusal.

Although an intimacy and a friendship existed between Mr. Patrick Henry and me in 1774, and continued till his death, yet I would not strip the laurels from other men to decorate his brows. Indulge me, Sir, in the vanity of inclosing to you a copy of an original letter from Mr. Henry to me, now in my hand, dated May 20th, 1776.[1] I had sent him a copy of that

[1] Printed in vol. iv. page 201.

marble-covered pamphlet, which I once sent to you, entitled "Thoughts on Government," and it is of that he acknowledges the receipt, and expresses his opinion.

If you can contribute any thing, Sir, to convince or persuade this nation to adopt a more honest medium of commerce, you will have my most cordial wishes for your success.

TO J. H. TIFFANY.

Quincy, 31 March, 1819.

Your political chart is a happy thought, and an invention as useful as it is ingenious. Accept my best thanks for the present you have made me of it, and for your obliging favor of March 18th, which came to my hand but yesterday.

As I have always been convinced, that abuse of words has been the great instrument of sophistry and chicanery, of party, faction, and division in society, the time has been when I would have attended you with pleasure in your pursuit of correct definitions. *Liberty* and *republic* are two words which you have judiciously chosen; but my forces are exhausted, and my days wellnigh spent. I therefore can be of no service to you.

Dr. Price has defined civil liberty, as distinguished from physical, moral, and religious liberty, to be the power of a civil society to govern itself, by its own discretion, or by laws of its own making, by the majority in a collective body or by fair representations.

I would define liberty to be a power to do as we would be done by. The definition of liberty to be the power of doing whatever the laws permit, meaning the civil laws, does not appear to be satisfactory. But I would rather refer you to other writers than to any thing of my own. Sidney, Harrington, Locke, Montesquieu, and even Hobbes, are worth consulting, and many others.

Custom is said to be the standard of the meaning of words; and for the purposes of common parlance it may answer well enough; but when science is concerned, something more technical must be introduced. The customary meanings of the

words *republic* and *commonwealth* have been infinite. They have been applied to every government under heaven; that of Turkey and that of Spain, as well as that of Athens and of Rome, of Geneva and San Marino. The strict definition of a republic is, that in which the sovereignty resides in more than one man. A democracy, then, is a republic, as well as an aristocracy, or any mixture of both.

The Federalist is a valuable work, and Mr. Madison's part in it as respectable as any other. But his distinction between a republic and a democracy, cannot be justified. A democracy is as really a republic as an oak is a tree, or a temple a building. There are, in strictness of speech and in the soundest technical language, democratical and aristocratical republics, as well as an infinite variety of mixtures of both.

TO J. H. TIFFANY.

Quincy, 30 April, 1819.

Of republics, the varieties are infinite, or at least as numerous as the tunes and changes that can be rung upon a complete set of bells. Of all the varieties, a democracy is the most natural, the most ancient, and the most fundamental and essential.

In some writing or other of mine, I happened, *currente calamo*, to drop the phrase, "The word *republic*, as it is used, may signify any thing, every thing, or nothing." For this escape, I have been pelted for twenty or thirty years with as many stones as ever were thrown at St. Stephen, when St. Paul held the clothes of the stoners. But the aphorism is literal, strict, solemn truth. To speak technically, or scientifically, if you will, there are monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical republics. The government of Great Britain and that of Poland are as strictly republics as that of Rhode Island or Connecticut under their old charters. If mankind have a right to the voice of experience, they ought to furnish that experience with pen and paper to write it, and an amanuensis to copy it.

I should have been extremely obliged to you, if you had

favored me with Mr. Jefferson's sentiments upon the subject. As I see you have an inquiring mind, I sincerely wish you much pleasure, profit, and success in your investigations. I have had some pleasure in them, but no profit; and very little, if any, success.

In one of your letters, you say that my Defence has become rare. This is strange. Mr. Dilly published an edition of it in London. An edition of it was published in Boston, another in New York, another in Philadelphia, before the adoption of the present constitution of the national government, and before one line of the Federalist was printed. Since that, Mr. Cobbet, alias Porcupine, printed a large edition of the whole work in Philadelphia, and Mr. Stockdale, of Piccadilly, has published another large edition in London. It has been translated into the French and German languages. And what has become of all these copies? Have they been torn up, or thrown away, to line trunks?

TO ROBERT J. EVANS.

Quincy, 8 June, 1819.

I respect the sentiments and motives, which have prompted you to engage in your present occupation, so much, that I feel an esteem and affection for your person, as I do a veneration for your assumed signature of Benjamin Rush. The turpitude, the inhumanity, the cruelty, and the infamy of the African commerce in slaves, have been so impressively represented to the public by the highest powers of eloquence, that nothing that I can say would increase the just odium in which it is and ought to be held. Every measure of prudence, therefore, ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery from the United States. If, however, humanity dictates the duty of adopting the most prudent measures for accomplishing so excellent a purpose, the same humanity requires, that we should not inflict severer calamities on the objects of our commiseration than those which they at present endure, by reducing them to despair, or the necessity of robbery, plunder, assassination, and massacre, to preserve their lives, some provision for furnish-

ing them employment, or some means of supplying them with the necessary comforts of life. The same humanity requires that we should not by any rash or violent measures expose the lives and property of those of our fellow-citizens, who are so unfortunate as to be surrounded with these fellow-creatures, by hereditary descent, or by any other means without their own fault. I have, through my whole life, held the practice of slavery in such abhorrence, that I have never owned a negro or any other slave, though I have lived for many years in times, when the practice was not disgraceful, when the best men in my vicinity thought it not inconsistent with their character, and when it has cost me thousands of dollars for the labor and subsistence of free men, which I might have saved by the purchase of negroes at times when they were very cheap.

If any thing should occur to me, which I think may assist you, I will endeavor to communicate it to you; but at an age, when

> "From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
> And Swift expires a driveller and a show,"

very little can be expected from, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 22 June, 1819.

May I inclose you one of the greatest curiosities and one of the deepest mysteries that ever occurred to me? It is in the Essex Register of June 5th, 1819. It is entitled the Raleigh Register Declaration of Independence. How is it possible that this paper should have been concealed from me to this day? Had it been communicated to me in the time of it, I know, if you do not know, that it would have been printed in every whig newspaper upon this continent. You know, that if I had possessed it, I would have made the hall of Congress echo and reëcho with it fifteen months before your Declaration of Independence. What a poor, ignorant, malicious, short-sighted, crapulous mass is Tom Paine's "Common Sense," in compa-

rison with this paper! Had I known it, I would have commented upon it, from the day you entered Congress till the fourth of July, 1776. The genuine sense of America at that moment was never so well expressed before, nor since. Richard Caswell, William Hooper, and Joseph Hewes, the then representatives of North Carolina in Congress, you knew as well as I, and you know that the unanimity of the States finally depended on the vote of Joseph Hewes, and was finally determined by him. And yet history is to ascribe the American Revolution to Thomas Paine! *Sat verbum sapienti.*[1]

TO WILLIAM BENTLEY.

Quincy, 15 July, 1819.

A few weeks ago I received an Essex Register, containing resolutions of independence by a county in North Carolina, fifteen months before the resolution of independence in Congress. I was struck with so much astonishment on reading this document, that I could not help inclosing it immediately to Mr. Jefferson, who must have seen it, in the time of it, for he has copied the spirit, the sense, and the expressions of it *verbatim*, into his Declaration of the 4th of July, 1776. Had I seen that declaration at the time of it, it should have been printed in every whig newspaper on this continent. Its total concealment from me is a mystery, which can be unriddled only by the timidity of the delegates in Congress from North Carolina, by the influence of Quakers and proprietary gentlemen in Pennsylvania, the remaining art and power of toryism throughout the continent at that time. That declaration would have had more effect than Tom Paine's "Common Sense," which appeared so long after it. I pray you to intercede with the printers to transmit me half a dozen copies of that Register, which contains it, and I will immediately transmit the money for them, whatever they may cost. That paper must be more universally made known to the present and future generation.

[1] Mr. Jefferson's answer is printed in Mr. Randolph's collection, vol. iv. p. 314. He called the Mecklenburg paper "a very unjustifiable quiz."

TO RICHARD BLAND LEE.

Quincy, 11 August, 1819.

I thank you for your oration on the red letter day in our national calendar, which I have read with mingled emotions. An invisible spirit seemed to suggest to me, in my left ear, "*nil admirari, nil contemnere;*" another spirit, at my right elbow, seemed to whisper in my ear, "*digito compesce labellum.*" But I will open my lips, and will say that your modesty and delicacy have restrained you from doing justice to your own name, that band of brothers, intrepid and unchangeable, who, like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, stood in the gap, in defence of their country, from the first glimmering of the Revolution in the horizon, through all its rising light, to its perfect day.

Thomas Lee, on whose praises Chancellor Wythe delighted to dwell, who has often said to me that Thomas Lee was the most popular man in Virginia, and the delight of the eyes of every Virginian, but who would not engage in public life; Richard Henry Lee, whose merits are better known and acknowledged, and need no illustration from me; Francis Lightfoot Lee, a man of great reading well understood, of sound judgment, and inflexible perseverance in the cause of his country; William Lee, who abandoned an advantageous establishment in England from attachment to his country, and was able and faithful in her service; Arthur Lee, a man of whom I cannot think without emotion; a man too early in the service of his country to avoid making a multiplicity of enemies; too honest, upright, faithful, and intrepid to be popular; too often obliged by his principles and feelings to oppose Machiavelian intrigues, to avoid the destiny he suffered. This man never had justice done him by his country in his lifetime, and I fear he never will have by posterity. His reward cannot be in this world.

TO WILLIAM BENTLEY.

Quincy, 21 August, 1819.

I thank you for the Raleigh Register and National Intelligencer. The plot thickens.

The name of the Cato of North Carolina, the honest, hoary-headed, stern, determined republican, *Macon*, strikes me with great force. But here is an accumulation of miracles.

1. The resolutions are such as every county in the thirteen colonies ought to have taken at that moment.

2. The Suffolk resolves, taken about the same time, were sufficiently famous, and adopted by Congress.

3. I was on social, friendly terms with Caswell, Hooper, and Hewes, every moment of their existence in Congress; with Hooper, a Bostonian, and a son of Harvard, intimate and familiar. Yet, from neither of the three did the slightest hint of these Mecklenburg resolutions ever escape.

4. Is it possible that such resolutions should have escaped the vigilant attention of the scrutinizing, penetrating minds of Patrick Henry, R. H. Lee, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Gadsden, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Jay, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Samuel Adams? *Haud credo.* I cannot believe that they were known to one member of Congress on the fourth of July, 1776.

5. Either these resolutions are a plagiarism from Mr. Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, or Mr. Jefferson's Declaration of Independence is a plagiarism from those resolutions. I could as soon believe that the dozen flowers of the Hydrangea, now before my eyes, were the work of chance, as that the Mecklenburg resolutions and Mr. Jefferson's Declaration were not derived the one from the other.

6. The declaration of one of the most respectable of the inhabitants of this city, Raleigh, ought to be produced.

7. The papers of Dr. Hugh Williamson ought to be searched for the copy sent to him, and the copy sent to General W. R. Davie. The Declaration of Independence made by Congress on the fourth of July, 1776, is a document, an instrument, a record that ought not to be disgraced or trifled with.

8. That this fiction is ancient and not modern, seems to be

ascertained. It is of so much more importance that it should be thoroughly investigated.[1]

I know not whether I have written the tenth part of the reflections that have occurred to me; but I have written more than my eyes and nerves can well bear.

TO WILLIAM E. RICHMOND.

Quincy, 14 December, 1819.

I have received your polite favor of the 10th, the subject of which is of great importance.

I am old enough to remember the war of 1745, and its end; the war of 1755, and its close; the war of 1775, and its termination; the war of 1812, and its pacification. Every one of these wars has been followed by a general distress; embarrassment on commerce, destruction of manufactures, fall of the price of produce and of lands, similar to those we feel at the present day, and all produced by the same causes. I have wondered that so much experience has not taught us more caution. The British merchants and manufacturers, immediately after the peace, disgorged upon us all their stores of merchandise and manufactures, not only without profit, but at certain loss for a time, with the express purpose of annihilating all our manufacturers, and ruining all our manufactories. The cheapness of these articles allures us into extravagance and luxury, involves us in debt, exhausts our resources, and at length produces universal complaint.

What would be the consequence of the abolition of all restrictive, exclusive, and monopolizing laws, if adopted by all the nations of the earth, I pretend not to say. But while all the nations, with whom we have intercourse, persevere in cherishing such laws, I know not how we can do ourselves justice without introducing, with great prudence and discretion, however, some portions of the same system.

[1] This subject has been since very formally investigated by a committee of the General Assembly of North Carolina. Their report made in 1830–31, is printed in Force's *American Archives*, fourth series, vol. ii. c. 855, note. A copy of the paper has also been found in the archives of the British government. No historical fact is better established.

The gentlemen of Philadelphia have published a very important volume upon the subject, which I recommend to your careful perusal. Other cities are coöperating in the same plan. I heartily wish them all success, so far as this at least, that Congress may take the great subject into their most serious deliberation, and decide upon it according to their most mature wisdom. The publications upon this subject in this country, within the year past, have been very luminous, and I recommend them all to your careful investigation. Upon the subject of political economy at large, I know of nothing better than a volume lately printed at Washington, written by Senator Tracy, in France, but never published there; well translated from a manuscript, by Mr. Jefferson. It contains the pith and marrow of the science; the great works of Sir James Stuart, of Adam Smith, and the lesser work of the Chevalier Pinto, are well worth your study, though I believe you will not agree with them in all things. The writings of Dr. Quesnay, and his disciples in France, may be worth your research and perusal, because some ideas may be collected from them, though I confess I could never perfectly understand them, nor agree with them in many things which I thought I did understand.

Your prospectus of a manufacturer's journal promises to be useful, and you appear to be very well qualified to conduct it; but I would not advise you to sacrifice your profession to it, because a man of talents and integrity at the bar is a character of great respectability and utility among his fellow-citizens.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 18 December, 1819.

I must answer your great question of the 10th in the words of D'Alembert to his correspondent, who asked him what is matter; "*Je vous avoue que je n'en sais rien.*" In some part of my life I read a great work of a Scotchman on the court of Augustus, in which, with much learning, hard study, and fatiguing labor, he undertook to prove that, had Brutus and Cas-

sius been conquerors, they would have restored virtue and liberty to Rome. *Mais je n'en crois rien.* Have you ever found in history one single example of a nation thoroughly corrupted, that was afterwards restored to virtue? And without virtue, there can be no political liberty.

If I were a Calvinist, I might pray that God, by a miracle of divine grace, would instantaneously convert a whole contaminated nation from turpitude to purity; but even in this I should be inconsistent, for the fatalism of Mahometans, Materialists, Atheists, Pantheists, and Calvinists, and Church of England articles, appears to me to render all prayer futile and absurd. The French and the Dutch in our day have attempted reforms and revolutions. We know the results, and I fear the English reformers will have no better success.

Will you tell me how to prevent riches from becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly?

When you will answer me these questions, I hope I may venture to answer yours. Yet all these things ought not to discourage us from exertion, for, with my friend Jebb, I believe no effort in favor of virtue is lost, and all good men ought to struggle, both by their counsel and example.

The Missouri question, I hope, will follow the other waves under the ship, and do no harm. I know it is high treason to express a doubt of the perpetual duration of our vast American empire and our free institutions: and I say as devoutly as father Paul, "*Esto perpetua;*" but I am sometimes Cassandra enough to dream that another Hamilton, another Burr, might rend this mighty fabric in twain, or, perhaps, into a leash, and a few more choice spirits of the same stamp might produce as many nations in North America as there are in Europe.

To return to the Romans. I never could discover that they possessed much virtue or real liberty. Their patricians were, in general, griping usurers and tyrannical creditors in all ages. Pride, strength, and courage, were all the virtues that composed their national character. A few of their nobles affecting simplicity, frugality, and piety, perhaps really possessing them, acquired popularity among the plebeians, extended the power

and dominions of the republic, and advanced in glory till riches and luxury came in, sat like an incubus on the republic, "*victamque ulciscitur orbem.*"

Our winter sets in a fortnight earlier than usual, and is pretty severe. I hope you have fairer skies and milder air. Wishing your health may last as long as your life, and your life as long as you desire it, I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 17 January, 1820.

When Harris was returned a member of Parliament, a friend introduced him to Chesterfield, whom he had never seen. "So, Mr. Harris," said his lordship, "you are a member of the House of Commons. You have written upon universal and scientific grammar; you have written upon art, upon music, painting, and poetry; — and what has the House of Commons to do with art, or music, or painting, or poetry, or taste? Have not you written upon virtue and happiness?" "I have, my lord, indulged myself in speculations upon those subjects." "And what the devil has the House of Lords to do with either happiness or virtue?" This idle tale, which I had from the mouth of Sir James Harris, now Lord Malmesbury, I repeat to you for a preface to another idle tale, which I am about to relate to you, namely — Too much confined by the cold weather, I have for a few days past whiled away the time in reading these pieces of Harris, and another, entitled Philosophical Arrangements. The Dialogue upon Happiness is one of the first pieces of morals I ever read. The Hermes is acknowledged a masterpiece; the others, under the appearance of immense learning and much ingenuity, contain little information, and few ideas that are new. But I have read them with the fond delight of a young lady reading a romance, on account of the investigation of the sentiments of ancient philosophers, poets, and orators, and the quotations from them in their own words — such as are by David Williams called the beautiful rags and tatters of antiquity.

By Philosophical Arrangements, he says, he means categories

or predicaments, or general or universal truths, or the first philosophy; but I have been most amused with his endeavors to find the meaning of the ancient philosophers concerning the first principles or elements of matter, which they reduce down to particles so nice and minute as to become geometrical points; and this seems to me to be much more orthodox philosophy and mathematics, too, than Buffon's "*Molécules organiques*," or Epicurus's atoms. With such games at push-pin have the childish philosophers of all ages diverted and distracted themselves, not once considering that neither human sense, nor imagination, nor intellect, was ever formed to comprehend all things. Harris's Dialogue on Happiness is worth all the metaphysical researches of philosophers, from the beginning of the world, into the nature of matter and spirit, of energy, of power, of activity, of motion, or any such thing. When we say God is a spirit, we know what we mean, as well as we do when we say that the pyramids of Egypt are matter. Let us be content, therefore, to believe him to be a spirit, that is, an essence that we know nothing of, in which originally and necessarily reside all energy, all power, all capacity, all activity, all wisdom, all goodness.

Behold the creed and confession of faith of your ever affectionate friend.

TO ELIHU MARSHALL.

Quincy, 7 March, 1820.

Friend Marshall, — I thank you for the honor you have done me by your letter of the 16th of last month, and for the valuable present of the American Tutor's Assistant, which I believe to be a valuable book. At the moment I received these favors, I was deeply engaged in reading Cato Major, and I could scarce help thinking that I was reading Tillotson, Sherlock, Butler, or our Buckminster or Everett; for there are few Christian theologians who teach better doctrines or express more ravishing feelings. I can read Cicero de Senectute, because I have read him for almost seventy years, and seem to have him almost by heart; but he never appeared so delightful to me as on this last reading, which may be partly owing to

Cato's age so near my own; he was in his eighty-fourth, and I in my eighty-fifth year.

I never delighted much in contemplating commas and colons, or in spelling or measuring syllables; but now, while reading Cato, if I attempt to look at these little objects, I find my imagination, in spite of all my exertions, roaming in the milky way, among the nebulæ, those mighty orbs, and stupendous orbits of suns, planets, satellites, and comets, which compose this incomprehensible universe; and, if I do not sink into nothing in my own estimation, I feel an irresistible impulse to fall on my knees, in adoration of the power that moves, the wisdom that directs, and the benevolence that sanctifies this wonderful whole.

As to writing a review of your volume, it is out of the question. My eyes are not able to read, nor my hand to write it; but as I have four grandchildren gone to school this morning where there are between one and two hundred scholars, I have given it to them to carry to their master, who is very capable of appreciating its value.

TO SAMUEL MILLER.

Quincy, 8 July, 1820.

You know not the gratification you have given me by your kind, frank, and candid letter. I must be a very unnatural son to entertain any prejudices against the Calvinists, or Calvinism, according to your confession of faith; for my father and mother, my uncles and aunts, and all my predecessors, from our common ancestor, who landed in this country two hundred years ago, wanting five months, were of that persuasion. Indeed, I have never known any better people than the Calvinists. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge that I cannot class myself under that denomination. My opinions, indeed, on religious subjects ought not to be of any consequence to any but myself. To develop them, and the reasons for them, would require a folio larger than Willard's Body of Divinity, and, after all, I might scatter darkness rather than light. Before I was twelve years of age, I necessarily became a reader of polemical writings of

religion, as well as politics, and for more than seventy years I have indulged myself in that kind of reading, as far as the wandering, anxious, and perplexed kind of life, which Providence has compelled me to pursue, would admit. I have endeavored to obtain as much information as I could of all the religions which have ever existed in the world. Mankind are by nature religious creatures. I have found no nation without a religion, nor any people without the belief of a supreme Being. I have been overwhelmed with sorrow to see the natural love and fear of that Being wrought upon by politicians to produce the most horrid cruelties, superstitions, and hypocrisy, from the sacrifices to Moloch down to those of Juggernaut, and the sacrifices of the kings of Whidah and Ashantee. The great result of all my researches has been a most diffusive and comprehensive charity. I believe with Justin Martyr, that all good men are Christians, and I believe there have been, and are, good men in all nations, sincere and conscientious. That you and I shall meet in a better world, I have no more doubt than I have that we now exist on the same globe. If my natural reason did not convince me of this, Cicero's dream of Scipio, and his essays on friendship and old age, would have been sufficient for the purpose. But Jesus has taught us, that a future state is a social state, when he promised to prepare places in his father's house of many mansions for his disciples.

By the way, I wonder not at the petition of the pagans to the emperor, that he would call in and destroy all the writings of Cicero, because they tended to prepare the mind of the people, as well as of the philosophers, to receive the Christian religion.

My kind compliments to Mrs. Miller, and thanks for the obliging visit she made me. I interest myself much in her family. Her father was one of my most intimate friends in an earlier part of his life, though we differed in opinion on the French Revolution, in the latter part of his days. I find that differences of opinion in politics, and even in religion, make but little alteration in my feelings and friendships when once contracted.

I have not received Mr. Sergeant's speech, nor the sketch.

TO CHARLES HOLT.

Quincy, 4 September, 1820.

The universal vanity of human nature must have obtruded itself on your observation, in the course of your experience, so forcibly, that you will easily imagine that your letter of August 27th has been received and read with much pleasure; besides, you know that the just always rejoiceth over every sinner that repenteth. Your letter,[1] however, did not surprise me, because I had received many such testimonials from other persons. For example, Mr. Matthew Carey has, in letters to me, acknowledged the same error, and has lately repented to me, in person and in conversation, and, moreover, has repeatedly printed handsome encomiums on my Defence of the American Constitutions, which he had many years vilified, before he had read it. And, what is more agreeably surprising to me, Judge Cooper, the learned and ingenious friend of Dr. Priestley, has lately published, in the Portfolio, a very handsome eulogium of that work. And what, perhaps, will be considered more than all, the learned and scientific President Jefferson has, in letters to me, acknowledged that I was right, and that he was wrong.[2]

My plain writings have been misunderstood by many, misrepresented by more, and vilified and anathematized by multitudes who never read them. They have, indeed, nothing to recommend them but stubborn facts, simple principles, and irresistible inferences from both, without any recommendation from ambitious ornaments of style, or studied artifices of arrangement; notwithstanding all which, amidst all the calumnies they have occasioned, I have the consolation to know, and the injustice I

[1] Mr. Holt, in 1800, was editor of the Bee, a partisan newspaper, published in Connecticut, and was imprisoned, under the sedition law, for a libel. In his letter he says: "I then wrote and published much against you, Sir, as an aristocrat in principle or royalist at heart, no friend to the "rights of man," and hostile to the "republicanism" of the United States. I had not read your "Defence of the American Constitutions," nor much of any political history, and but very little in the book of living experience. But, Sir, I have since, although publisher of a political gazette sixteen years after, seen and felt abundant cause for discarding the impressions I then entertained, and adopting opinions gathered from all observation and confirmed by all experience."

[2] Perhaps this is too general a statement. The allusion is to the opposite opinions entertained of the probable results of the French Revolution.

have suffered ought to excuse me in saying, that they have been translated into the French, German, and Spanish languages; that they are now contributing to introduce representative governments into various nations of Europe, as they have before contributed to the introduction and establishment of our American Constitutions, both of the individual States and the nation at large; and that they are now employed, and have been, in assisting the South Americans in establishing their liberties, from the days of Miranda to this hour. I may say, with Lord Bacon, that I bequeathe my writings to foreign nations, and to my own country, after a few generations shall be overpast.

This letter has so much the appearance of vanity, that I pray you not to publish it in print; though calumny, with her hundred cat-o'-nine-tails, has lashed me so long, that my skin has become almost as hard and insensible as steel, and her severest strokes would scarcely be felt. After all, I sincerely thank you for your frank and candid letter, which does you much honor, and is a full atonement for all your errors in relation to me, who am, Sir, your sincere well-wisher and most humble servant.

TO HENRY CHANNING.

Quincy, 3 November, 1820.

I have received your favor of the 26th of October, with the copy of the Connecticut constitution. This is the second copy which I have received from you, and I am afraid it is the first that has been acknowledged. For this negligence I beg your pardon, and pray you to accept my cordial thanks for both these valuable favors.

The *cantilena sacerdotis* will be sung as long as priesthood shall exist. I mean not by this, however, to condemn the article in our Declaration of Rights. I mean to keep my mind open to conviction upon this subject, until I shall be called upon to give a vote.[1] An abolition of this law would have so great an

[1] Mr. Adams had been chosen a member of the convention about to be held for the revision of the Constitution of Massachusetts. The third article is the one referred to. See vol. iv. p. 221.

effect in this State that it seems hazardous to touch it. However, I am not about to discuss the question at present. In Rhode Island, I am informed, public preaching is supported by three or four wealthy men in the parish, who either have, or appear to have, a regard for religion, while all others sneak away, and avoid payment of any thing. And such, I believe, would be the effect in this State almost universally; yet this I own is not a decisive argument in favor of the law. *Sub judice lis est.* The feelings of the people will have pomp and parade of some sort or another, in the State as well as in the Church. In the Church they have risen from the parson's band and the communion plate up to the church of St. Peter's and the Vatican library. In the State they have risen from oaken crowns and olive branches up to thrones, sceptres, and diadems, gold, ivory, and precious stones to the amount of millions. In Pliny's Natural History you may see the gradual rise and progress for seven hundred years of luxury and ceremony, from iron rings upon the fingers, to the splendors of Lucullus, Antony, and Crassus.

I have great reason to rejoice in the happiness of my country, which has fully equalled, though not exceeded, the sanguine anticipation of my youth. God prosper long our glorious country, and make it a pattern to the world!

As a member to the convention, I can be but the shadow of a man. An election, however, to this situation, at my great age and feeble condition of body and mind, I esteem the purest honor of my life, and shall endeavor to do as much of my duty as my strength will permit. I presume it will not be made a question now, as it was forty years ago, whether we should have a governor, or a senate, or judges during good behavior. What questions will be moved, I cannot say; but I hope that no essential flaw will be found or made in the good old forty-two pounder, though it should be tried over again after forty years usage, by a double charge of powder and ball.

TO GEORGE ALEXANDER OTIS.

Monticello, 9 February, 1821.

I thank you for your favor of the 29th of January, and your translation of Botta. I have not yet read it, for I received it but yesterday, and reading is to me so laborious and painful an occupation, that it requires a long time. But I cannot refrain from expressing the pleasure I have received from the reasoning of Mr. Jay upon the passage in Botta, "that anterior to the Revolution there existed in the Colonies a desire of independence." There is great ambiguity in the expression, "there existed in the Colonies a desire of independence." It is true there always existed in the Colonies a desire of independence of Parliament in the articles of internal taxation and internal policy, and a very general, if not a universal opinion, that they were constitutionally entitled to it, and as general a determination, if possible, to maintain and defend it. But there never existed a desire of independence of the crown, or of general regulations of commerce for the equal and impartial benefit of all parts of the empire. It is true, there might be times and circumstances in which an individual, or a few individuals, might entertain and express a wish that America was independent in all respects, but these were "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*" For example, in one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six, seven, and eight, the conduct of the British generals Shirley, Braddock, Loudon, Webb, and Abercrombie was so absurd, disastrous, and destructive, that a very general opinion prevailed that the war was conducted by a mixture of ignorance, treachery, and cowardice; and some persons wished we had nothing to do with Great Britain forever. Of this number I distinctly remember I was myself one, fully believing that we were able to defend ourselves against the French and Indians, without any assistance or embarrassment from Great Britain. In 1758 and 1759, when Amherst and Wolfe changed the fortune of the war by a more able and faithful conduct of it, I again rejoiced in the name of Great Britain, and should have rejoiced in it to this day, had not the King and Parliament committed high treason and rebellion against America, as soon as they had conquered Canada and made peace with France.

That there existed a general desire of independence of the crown, in any part of America before the Revolution, is as far from the truth as the zenith is from the nadir. That the encroaching disposition of Great Britain would one day attempt to enslave them by an unlimited submission to Parliament and rule them with a rod of iron, was early foreseen by many wise men in all the States; that this attempt would produce resistance on the part of America, and an awful struggle, was also foreseen, but dreaded and deprecated as the greatest calamity that could befall them. For my own part, there was not a moment during the Revolution, when I would not have given every thing I ever possessed for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had any sufficient security for its continuance. I always dreaded the Revolution, as fraught with ruin to me and my family; and, indeed, it has been but little better.

I could entertain you with many little trifling anecdotes, which, though familiar and vulgar, would indicate the temper, feelings, and forebodings among the people, that I cannot write.

I see at the end of the biography of the author, that Botta has written the biography of John Adams. I never saw or heard of it before; but if he means me, it must be a curious mass, for he can certainly have no authentic information on the insignificant subject.[1]

TO RICHARD H. LEE.

Quincy, 24 February, 1821.

You have conferred an obligation upon me by your kind letter of February the 6th. In former years of my life I reckoned among my friends four gentlemen of your name; Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, William Ludwell Lee, and Arthur Lee, — all gentlemen of respectable characters for capacity, information, and integrity. With your grandfather, Richard Henry Lee, I served in Congress from 1774 to 1778, and afterwards in the Senate of the United States in 1789. He was a

[1] It is inserted in the large French work, entitled *Biographie Universelle.*

gentleman of fine talents, of amiable manners, and great worth. As a public speaker, he had a fluency as easy and graceful as it was melodious, which his classical education enabled him to decorate with frequent allusion to some of the finest passages of antiquity. With all his brothers he was always devoted to the cause of his country. I am glad you are about to commence a memoir of that illustrious patriot.

I cannot take upon me to assert, upon my own memory, who were the movers of particular measures in Congress, because I thought it of little importance. I have read in some of our histories, that Governor Johnson, of Maryland, nominated Mr. Washington for commander-in-chief of the army; Mr. Chase made the first motion for foreign alliances; Mr. Richard Henry Lee for a declaration of independence. As such motions were generally concerted beforehand, I presume Mr. Johnson was designated to nominate a general, because the gentlemen from Virginia declined, from delicacy, the nomination of their own colleague. Mr. Richard H. Lee was preferred for the motion for independence, because he was from the most ancient colony, &c. Mr. Chase for foreign alliances, that too many motions may not be made by the same member, &c., &c. It ought to be eternally remembered, that the eastern members were interdicted from taking the lead in any great measures, because they lay under an odium and a great weight of unpopularity. Because they had been suspected from the beginning of having independence in contemplation, they were restrained from the appearance of promoting any great measures by their own discretion, as well as by the general sense of Congress. That your grandfather made a speech in favor of a declaration of independence, I have no doubt, and very probably more than one, though I cannot take upon me to repeat from memory any part of his speeches, or any others that were made upon that occasion. The principles and sentiments and expressions of the Declaration of Independence had been so often pronounced and echoed and reëchoed in that Congress for two years before, and especially for the last six months, that it will forever be impossible to ascertain who uttered them, and upon what occasion.

I applaud your piety in recording the fame of your ancestor, and heartily wish you success in the enterprise.

TO RICHARD RUSH.

Quincy, 14 May, 1821.

Dear Mr. Rush, — I have been tenderly affected by the kind expressions of your friendship, in your letter of the 9th of February.

In the course of forty years I have been called twice to assist in the formation of a constitution for this State. This kind of architecture, I find, is an art or mystery very difficult to learn, and still harder to practise. The attention of mankind at large seems now to be drawn to this interesting subject. It gives me more solicitude than, at my age, it ought to do; for nothing remains for me but submission and resignation. Nevertheless, I cannot wholly divest myself of anxiety for my children, my country, and my species. The probability is, that the fabrication of constitutions will be the occupation or the sport, the tragedy, comedy, or farce, for the entertainment of the world for a century to come. There is little appearance of the prevalence of correct notions of the indispensable machinery of a free government, in any part of Europe or America. Neither Spain, Portugal, or Naples can long preserve their fundamental laws under their present constitutions. But I must recollect that I am not reading a lecture.

But, hazardous as it may be, I will venture one remark upon our National and State institutions.

The legislative and executive authorities are too much blended together. While the Senate of the United States have a negative on all appointments to office, we can never have a national President. In spite of his own judgment, he must be the President, not to say the tool, of a party. In Massachusetts, the legislature annually elect an executive council, which renders the Governor a mere Doge of Venice, a mere "*testa di legno*," a mere head of wood.

Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to liberty, and few nations, if any, have found it.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 19 May, 1821.

Must we, before we take our departure from this grand and beautiful world, surrender all our pleasing hopes of the progress of society, of the improvement of the intellect and moral condition of the world, of the reformation of mankind?

The Piedmontese revolution scarcely assumed a form, and the Neapolitan bubble is burst. And what should hinder the Spanish and Portuguese constitutions from running to the same ruin? The Cortes is in one assembly vested with the legislative power. The king and his priests, armies, navies, and all other officers, are vested with the executive authority of government. Are not here two authorities up, neither supreme? Are they not necessarily rivals, constantly contending, like law, physic, and divinity, for superiority? Just ready for civil war?

Can a free government possibly exist with the Roman Catholic religion? The art of lawgiving is not so easy as that of architecture or painting. New York and Rhode Island are struggling for conventions to reform their constitutions, and I am told there is danger of making them worse. Massachusetts has had her convention; but our sovereign lords, the people, think themselves wiser than their representatives, and in several articles I agree with their lordships. Yet there never was a cooler, a more patient, candid, or a wiser deliberative body than that convention.

I may refine too much, I may be an enthusiast, but I think a free government is a complicated piece of machinery, the nice and exact adjustment of whose springs, wheels, and weights, is not yet well comprehended by the artists of the age, and still less by the people.

I began this letter principally to inquire after your health, and to repeat assurances of the affection of your friend.

TO DAVID SEWALL.

Quincy, 22 May, 1821.

How do you do? As we have been friends for seventy years, and are candidates for promotion to another world, where I hope we shall be better acquainted, I think we ought to inquire now and then after each other's health and welfare, while we stay here. I am not tormented with the fear of death, nor, though suffering under many infirmities, and agitated by many afflictions, weary of life. I have a better opinion of this world and of its Ruler than some people seem to have. A kind Providence has preserved and supported me for eighty-five years and seven months, through many dangers and difficulties, though in great weakness, and I am not afraid to trust in its goodness to all eternity. I have a numerous posterity, to whom my continuance may be of some importance, and I am willing to await the order of the Supreme Power. We shall leave the world with many consolations. It is better than we found it. Superstition, persecution, and bigotry are somewhat abated; governments are a little ameliorated; science and literature are greatly improved, and more widely spread. Our country has brilliant and exhilarating prospects before it, instead of that solemn gloom in which many of the former parts of our lives have been obscured. The condition of your State, I hope, has been improved by its separation from ours, though we scarcely know how to get along without you.

Information of your health and welfare will be a gratification to your sincere friend and humble servant.

TO JOHN MARSTON.

Quincy, 1 September, 1821.

The Roman dictator was Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus. His master of the horse was Caius Servilius Ahala, whose daring and dangerous exploit was killing Spurius Mælius for aiming at royalty. The story is in Livy, book 4th, chapter 13th; in Rol-

lin's Roman History, vol. ii. p. 46; in Adams's Defence, vol. iii. p. 242.[1] The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius Halicarnassensis come not down so low. His account is lost, but I presume the anecdote is to be found in every general Roman history.

Is it not remarkable, that this most memorable of all the applications of the phrase, "*Macte virtute esto*," is omitted in all the dictionaries? Stephens, Faber, Ainsworth, amidst all their learned lumber, have forgotten this. They have quoted Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, and even the wag Horace, but overlooked Livy.[2]

Horace, the rogue, in his first book of satires, satire second, lines 31 and 32, puts these words into the mouth of Cato, and applies them for a very curious moral purpose, —

> "Macte
> Virtute esto, inquit sententia dia Catonis.
> Nam simulac venas inflavit tetra libido,
> Huc juvenes æquum est descendere, non alienas
> Permolere uxores."

Virgil, in his ninth Æneid, has made Apollo say to Ascanius, after his noble juvenile exploit in killing Numanus, —

> "Macte novâ virtute, puer; sic itur ad astra,
> Dis genite, et geniture deos."

He afterwards descends from his cloud, in the shape of old Butes, the armor-bearer and janitor, and gives Iulus good advice.

> "Sit satis, Æneada, telis impune Numanum
> Oppetiisse tuis; primam hanc tibi magnus Apollo
> Concedit laudem, et paribus non invidet armis.
> Cætera parce, puer, bello."

TO RICHARD RUSH.

Quincy, 28 November, 1821.

I love to see a young man, who, in the language of Montesquieu, is capable *de s'estimer beaucoup;* but in an old man this

[1] Vol. vi. p. 27 of the present work.

[2] In an address to the corps of military cadets from West Point, who paid a visit to Mr. Adams at his house, Mr. Adams had used these words. Mr. Marston, who was a townsman and constant visitor, had asked for some account of them. The address itself, as coming from a man, then in his eighty-sixth year, is sufficiently remarkable to be preserved in the appendix (A) to this volume.

is rather odious than amiable. The kind compliments in your letter of the 30th September make me too proud for a man in his eighty-seventh year; but your idea of a picture overcame all my gravity, and made me laugh outright. What would the lords of the gentlemen's seats in England say to a picture of my house of eight rooms, as Fearon said, though he has diminished the number nearly one half? However, my imagination was soon seized with other questions. What point of time would a painter seize, and what particular scene would he select? That in which the young gentlemen were at breakfast, under an awning, after a march of nine miles in a very hot morning; or that, in which after breakfast they prostrated themselves on the ground, under shades of trees, and went to sleep as decently and as soundly as if they had been at church; or that, in which they were drawn up on a small round elevation of green grass, opposite the house, on the other side of the road, going through their exercises and manœuvres? Or, when they were drawn up in a body, before the piazza, listening to an old man, melting with heat, quaking with palsy, tormented with rheumatism and sciatic, and scarcely able to stand, uttering a few words by way of commentary on their two mottoes, "*Scientia ad gloriam*," and "*Paremus?*" After mature reflection, I rejected all these, and fixed upon the last, when the whole body marched up in a file, taking the old man by the hand; taking a final leave of him forever, and receiving his poor blessing.[1]

Never before, but once, in the whole course of my life, was my soul so melted into the milk of human kindness; and that once was when four or five hundred fine young fellows appeared before me in Philadelphia, presenting an address and receiving my answer. On both occasions I felt as if I could lay down a hundred lives to preserve the liberties and promote the prosperity of so noble a rising generation. But enough, and too much, of this. No picture will ever be drawn; indeed, the subject is too slight.

Is all Europe going together by the ears about the Turkish province of Albania? Are the Greeks rising, like the phœnix, from their ashes? Is Britain sending forces to the Ionian islands to check the empires?

[1] This alludes to the same event mentioned in the preceding note.

The South Americans have translated the clumsy book you hint at into Spanish, but whether they will derive any benefit from it, I know not.

TO RICHARD PETERS.

Quincy, 31 March, 1822.

If you have brought upon yourself the garrulity of old age, you must blame yourself for it. Theophrastus at ninety, as some say, and at one hundred and fifteen, as others, in his last moments is recorded to have said, it was hard to go out of the world, when he had just learned to live in it. I am so far from his temper and his philosophy, that I think myself so well drilled and disciplined a soldier as to be willing to obey the word of command whenever it shall come, and in general or particular orders. Nevertheless, your letter has excited feelings somewhat like his. I agree with you in your recollection of the suffering, the sacrifices, the dangers, distresses, and the disinterested character of the principal actors in the Revolution, but I have lately plunged into a new sea of reading. The collections of our Massachusetts Historical Society have lately attracted my attention, and though I am too blind to read them, I have put in requisition sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, grandsons and granddaughters, or occasional friends, to perform the office of reader. In this way, I have heard read Hubbard's History of New England, Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, Morton's Memorial, the original writings of Winslow, Bradford, Gookin, Eliot, and twenty others, the most ancient memorials of emigrations to America. All the superstition, fanaticism, quaintness, cant, barbarous poetry, and uncouthness of style have not prevented this reading exciting in me as ardent an interest as I ever felt in reading Homer or Virgil, Milton, Pope, or Shakspeare.

Silence, then, ye revolutionary heroes, patriots, and sages! Never boast of your superiority for services or sufferings or sacrifices! Our Hancocks and Washingtons never exceeded in disinterestedness dozens of emigrants to America two hun-

dred years ago. In short, the whole history of America for two hundred years appears to me to exhibit a uniform, general tenor of character for intelligence, integrity, patience, fortitude, and public spirit. One generation has little pretension for boasting over another.

I will add one other extraordinary. I have heard read the proceedings of the New York convention. They have been as entertaining to me as a romance. The gentlemen have sagaciously and profoundly searched their own and one another's hearts, and very frankly, candidly, and penitentially confessed their sins to one another, like good Christians. A great number of enlightened men have distinguished themselves by their information and by their eloquence. The new constitution is an improvement, upon the whole, upon the old, though a tendency to the extreme of democracy is apparent in that State, as in all the others in the Union.

If I have wearied your patience, I shall endeavor to be shorter for the future. I am, Sir, and will be, your friend, forever.

TO WILLIAM THOMAS.

Quincy, 10 August, 1822.

The grounds and principles on which the third article of the treaty of 1783 was contended for on our part, and finally yielded on the part of the British, were these.

1. That the Americans, and the adventurers to America, were the first discoverers and the first practisers of the fisheries.

2. That New England, and especially Massachusetts, had done more in defence of them than all the rest of the British empire. That the various projected expeditions to Canada, in which they were defeated by British negligence, the conquest of Louisburg, in 1745, and the subsequent conquest of Nova Scotia, in which New England had expended more blood and treasure than all the rest of the British empire, were principally effected with a special view to the security and protection of the fisheries.

3. That the inhabitants of the United States had as clear a

right to every branch of those fisheries, and to cure fish on land, as the inhabitants of Canada or Nova Scotia; that the citizens of Boston, New York, or Philadelphia had as clear a right to those fisheries, as the citizens of London, Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow, or Dublin.

4. That third article was demanded as an *ultimatum*, and it was declared that no treaty of peace should ever be made without it; and when the British ministers found that peace could not be made without that article, they consented; for Britain wanted peace, if possible, more than we did.

5. We asked no pardon, we requested no grant, and would accept none. We demanded it as a right, and we demanded an explicit acknowledgment of that as an indispensable condition of peace; and the word *right* was in the article as agreed to by the British ministers, but they afterwards requested that the word *liberty* might be substituted instead of *right*. They said it amounted to the same thing, for liberty was right and privilege was right; but the word *right* might be more unpleasing to the people of England than *liberty;* and we did not think it necessary to contend for a word. To detail the conferences and conversations which took place for six weeks on this subject, would require volumes, if they could now be remembered. Mr. Jay is the only person now living, who was officially concerned in that negotiation, and I am not afraid to appeal to his memory for the truth of these facts. Lord St. Helens, then Mr. Fitzherbert, though not officially concerned in the negotiation, was instructed by the British minister to assist at our conferences, and he was freely and candidly admitted by us. I dare appeal to his lordship's memory for the truth of these facts. There is another excellent character still living, Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, of Kennebec, who was then a confidential friend of Lord Shelburne, and an intimate friend of the British negotiators, and I dare appeal to his recollection of the representations made to him of the conferences concerning the fisheries, by Mr. Oswald, Mr. Fitzherbert, and Mr. Whitefoord.

6. We considered that treaty as a division of the empire. Our independence, our rights to territory and to the fisheries, as practised before the Revolution, were no more a grant from Britain to us, than the treaty was a grant from us of Canada,

Nova Scotia, England, Scotland, and Ireland to the Britons. The treaty was nothing more than mutual acknowledgment of antecedent rights.

If there is any other question that you wish me to answer, I shall be happy to do it, so long as my strength may last. I had omitted what follows.

7. We urged upon the British ministers that it was the interest of England herself that we should hold fast forever all the rights contained in that article, because all the profits we made by those fisheries went regularly to Great Britain in gold and silver, to purchase and pay for their manufactures; that if it were in her power, which it was not, to exclude us from or abridge these rights, they would be the dupes of their weak policy.

8. That if we should consent to an exclusion, the stipulation would not be regarded; our bold and hardy seamen would trespass; they must keep a standing naval force on the coast to prevent them; our people would fight and complain, and this would be speedily and infallibly the source of another war between the two nations.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 9 March, 1823.

The sight of your well-known handwriting in your favor of February 25th last, gave me great pleasure, as it proved your arm to be restored, and your pen still manageable. May it continue till you shall become as perfect a Calvinist as I am, in one particular. Poor Calvin's infirmities, his rheumatism, his gout, and sciatica, made him frequently cry out, "*Mon dieu! jusqu'à quand?*" "Lord! how long?" Pratt, once Chief Justice of New York, always tormented with infirmities, dreamed that he was situated on a single rock in the midst of the Atlantic ocean. He heard a voice,

> "Why mourns the bard? Apollo bids thee rise,
> Renounce the dirt, and claim thy native skies."

The ladies' visit to Monticello has put my readers in requisition to read to me "Simond's Travels in Switzerland." I

thought I had some knowledge of that country before, but I find I had no idea of it. How degenerated are the Swiss! They might defend their country against France, Austria, and Russia, neither of whom ought to be suffered to march armies over their mountains. Those powers have practised as much tyranny and immorality, as ever the Emperor Napoleon did, over them, or over the *roitelets* of Germany or Italy. Neither France, Austria, or Spain, ought to have one foot of land in Italy.

All conquerors are alike. Every one of them, "*jura negat sibi lata, nihil non arrogat armis.*" We have nothing but fables concerning Theseus, Bacchus, and Hercules, and even Sesostris, but I dare say that every one of them was as tyrannical and immoral as Napoleon. Nebuchadnezzar is the first great conqueror of whom we have any thing like history, and he was as great as any of them. Alexander and Cæsar were more immoral than Napoleon. Genghis Khan was as great a conqueror as any of them, and destroyed as many millions of lives, and thought he had a right to the whole globe, if he could subdue it. What are we to think of the crusades, in which three millions of lives, at least, were probably sacrificed. And what right had St. Louis and Richard Cœur de Lion to Palestine and Syria, more than Alexander to India, or Napoleon to Egypt and Italy? Right and justice have hard fare in this world, but there is a Power above who is capable and willing to put all things right in the end, "*et pour mettre chacun à sa place dans l'univers;*" and I doubt not he will.

Mr. English, a Bostonian, has published a volume of his expedition with Ismael Pasha up the river Nile. He advanced above the third cataract, and opens a prospect of a resurrection from the dead of those vast and ancient countries of Abyssinia and Ethiopia; a free communication with India, and the river Niger, and the city of Timbuctoo. This, however, is conjecture and speculation rather than certainty; but a free communication by land between Europe and India will ere long be opened. A few American steamboats and our Quincy stone-cutters would soon make the Nile as navigable as our Hudson, Potomac, or Mississippi.

You see, as my reason and intellect fail, my imagination grows more wild and ungovernable, but my friendship remains the same. Adieu.

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.

Quincy, 9 March, 1823.

In one of your letters, if I remember right, you expressed a desire to see my letters to Mr. Calkoen. The history of those letters is this. At a dinner with a large company, I met with that learned civilian, who came to me, and seated himself by my side, and expressed an ardent curiosity to converse with me upon the subject of the American war. He asked me many questions in French, in which language he was very imperfect; he had no English, and I had no Dutch. I was about as clumsy in French as he was; however, he asked me many questions, to which I gave him prompt answers. Some of the gentlemen present, who understood the language better, helped us a little to interpret; but at the conclusion of the conversation I said to him I feared I had not fully understood his questions, and not clearly expressed my answers, but if he would do me the honor to commit his questions to writing, I would give him the answers in writing. Accordingly, in a very short time I received from him twenty-six questions in Dutch. Mr. Le Roy (now, I presume, one of the most opulent merchants in New York) was then a young gentleman, very amiable, very intelligent, always very friendly to me, as was his aunt, Madame Chabanelle, and all her family. Mr. Le Roy offered to translate them for me into English, and he did so, in a very correct and literal sense. I immediately commenced writing answers, and I wrote him twenty-six letters, one letter every day. Mr. Calkoen acknowledged that I had comprehended his questions, and given him perfectly intelligible answers. Mr. Calkoen composed out of these letters a dissertation upon the question, whether the Americans would maintain their independence or not. He composed a comparison between the Dutch revolution and the American, and concluded by this observation, "as it was a miracle that the Dutch revolution succeeded, it would be, in his opinion, a greater miracle still if the American did not." This composition he read to a society of men of letters, who met periodically at Amsterdam, and it consequently became a subject of much conversation in the city. But these letters had much less effect in opening the eyes of the Dutch nation, than two other mea-

sures. I had received from London two large pamphlets; one from General Burgoyne, an apology for his conduct and ill success in America; another from General Howe, containing his justification of his conduct in America and his want of success. Both these works represented the British cause in America as more forlorn and desperate than even I had done in my letters to Mr. Calkoen. I employed Cerisier to get these translated into French, and he had it done in so short a time as amazed me. I had a large edition of them printed, and scattered as many as I could, and they were scattered by others, and read by everybody who had given any attention to the war, and produced a general conviction that the game was up with England.

When you have kept this pamphlet as long as you please, and read it as much as you please, return it to me, as I have no other copy.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 15 August, 1823.

Watchman! what of the night? Is darkness that may be felt, to prevail over the whole world, or can you perceive any rays of a returning dawn? Is the devil to be the "Lord's anointed" over the whole globe? or do you foresee the fulfilment of the prophecies according to Dr. Priestley's interpretation of them? I know not but I have in some of my familiar and frivolous letters to you told the story four times over; but if I have, I never applied it so well as now. Not long after the *dénouement* of the tragedy of Louis XVI., when I was Vice-President, my friend, the Doctor, came to breakfast with me alone. He was very sociable, very learned and eloquent on the subject of the French Revolution. It was opening a new era in the world, and presenting a near view of the millennium. I listened, I heard with great attention, and perfect *sang froid;* at last I asked the Doctor, "Do you really believe the French will establish a free, democratic government in France?" He answered, "I do firmly believe it." "Will you give me leave to ask you upon what grounds you entertain this opinion? Is it from any thing you ever read in history? Is there any instance of a

Roman Catholic monarchy of five-and-twenty millions of people, at once converted into intelligent, free, and rational people?" "No. I know of no instance like it." "Is there any thing in your knowledge of human nature, derived from books or experience, that any empire, ancient or modern, consisting of such multitudes of ignorant people, ever were, or ever can be, suddenly converted into materials capable of conducting a free government, especially a democratic republic?" "No. I know of nothing of the kind." "Well, then, Sir, what is the ground of your opinion?" The answer was, "My opinion is founded altogether upon revelation and the prophecies. I take it that the ten horns of the great beast in Revelations mean the ten crowned heads of Europe, and that the execution of the king of France is the falling off of the first of those horns; and the nine monarchies of Europe will fall, one after another, in the same way." Such was the enthusiasm of that great man, that reasoning machine! After all, however, he did recollect himself so far as to say, "There is, however, a possibility of doubt, for I read yesterday a book, put into my hands by a gentleman, a volume of travels, written by a French gentleman in 1659, in which he says he had been travelling a whole year in England, had travelled into every part, and conversed freely with all ranks of people. He found the whole nation earnestly engaged in discussing and contriving a form of government for their future regulation. There was but one point on which they all agreed, and in that they were unanimous, that monarchy, nobility, and prelacy never would exist in England again." The Doctor then paused, and said, "yet in the very next year the whole nation called in the king, and ran mad with monarchy nobility, and prelacy.

I am no king killer, merely because they are kings. Poor creatures! they know no better; they sincerely and conscientiously believe that God made them to rule the world. I would not, therefore, behead them, or send them to St. Helena to be treated like Napoleon; but I would shut them up like the man in the mask, feed them well, and give them as much finery as they please, until they could be converted to right reason and common sense.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 17 September, 1823.

With much pleasure I have heard read the sure words of prophecy in your letter of September 4th. It is melancholy to contemplate the cruel wars, desolations of countries, and oceans of blood, which must occur before rational principles and rational systems of government can prevail and be established; but as these are inevitable, we must content ourselves with the consolations which you from sound and sure reasons so clearly suggest. These hopes are as well founded as our fears of the contrary evils. On the whole, the prospect is cheering. I have lately undertaken to read Algernon Sidney on Government There is a great difference in reading a book at four-and-twenty and at eighty-eight. As often as I have read it and fumbled it over, it now excites fresh admiration that this work has excited so little interest in the literary world. As splendid an edition of it as the art of printing can produce, as well for the intrinsic merits of the work, as for the proof it brings of the bitter sufferings of the advocates of liberty from that time to this, and to show the slow progress of moral, philosophical, political illumination in the world, ought to be now published in America.

It is true that Mr. Jay, as well as Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Johnson, contributed to retard many vigorous measures, and particularly the vote of independence, until he left Congress; but I have reason to think he would have concurred in that vote when it was taken, if he had been there. His absence was accidental. Congress, on the 15th of May preceding, as I remember, had recommended to all the States to abolish all authority under the crown, and institute and organize a new government, under the authority of the people. Mr. Jay had promoted this resolution in New York, by advising them to call a convention to frame a new constitution. He had been chosen a member of that convention, and called home by his constituents to assist in it, and as Duane told me, he had gone home, with my letter to Wythe in his pocket, for his model and foundation; and the same Duane, after the Constitution appeared, asked me if it was not sufficiently conformable to my letter to Wythe. I answered him, I believed it would do very well.

Mr. Jay was immediately appointed Chief Justice of the State, and obliged to enter immediately on the duties of his office, which occasioned his detention from Congress afterwards. But I have no doubt had he been in Congress at the time, he would have subscribed to the Declaration of Independence. He would have been neither recalled by his constituents, nor have left Congress himself, like Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Willing, Governor Livingston, and several others.

As you write so easily and so well, I pray you to write me as often as possible, for nothing revives my spirits so much as your letters, except the society of my son and his family, who are now happily with me after an absence of two years.

P. S. Warmly as I feel for the Spanish patriots, I fear the most sensible men among them have little confidence in their constitution, which it appears to me is modelled upon that in France of the year 1789, in which the sovereignty in a single assembly was every thing, and the executive nothing. The Spaniards have adopted all this, with the singular addition that the members of the Cortes can serve only two years? What rational being can have any well-grounded confidence in such a constitution?

JOHN TAYLOR TO JOHN ADAMS.

Washington, 8 April, 1824.

During a long illness, from which I am not yet recovered, the reveries which usually amuse sick people visited me; and among them the idea of writing a farewell letter to you presented itself so often as to leave an impression, which I have not been able to subdue. In yielding to it, my free style will, I hope, be pardoned, in consideration of its being the last trouble I shall give you; and also on account of its chief motive, namely, to make an humble addition to the multitude of testimonials which exist of your patriotism and integrity, from one who has been a spectator of political scenes, from a period some years anterior to the revolutionary war; from one who has often

differed with you in opinion, but has never ceased to be impressed with a conviction of your exalted merit.

So early, I think, (for at this place I must speak merely from memory,) as the year 1765, you braved the British lion, when his teeth and claws were highly dangerous, in a series of essays, containing principles which I have lately reperused with delight; and, considering the early period at which they were written, with admiration. And I believe that in the progress of the struggle for the liberty of our country, your efforts in speaking and writing were a thousandfold more efficacious than those of many individuals of great celebrity — of our Henry, for instance. These designated you for a long series of the most important negotiations, conducted with a diligence, integrity, and capacity, universally admired by your countrymen; and the hopes which your early merits had inspired, being fulfilled, they placed you next to Washington.

When your Presidency commenced, party spirit was highly inflamed, and its capabilities may be conjectured by those who were not witnesses of its effects then, by contemplating its effects now, in carrying men into unpremeditated excesses, even though it is invigorated by nothing but a love of power. Yet during its bitterest prevalence, you soared above its prejudices, and saved your country from a ruinous war with France. This magnanimous act awakened the vengeance of an erroneous zeal, and your reëlection was probably prevented by a pamphlet, subscribed "Alexander Hamilton," then beheld by those of us who advocated the election of Mr. Jefferson, as well calculated to advance our object; but which, upon reading it lately, seems to me to be the most malicious, foolish, and inexcusable composition, which was ever produced by a tolerable mind.

. . . . . .

You will readily perceive that this letter is intended only for your own ear, as an additional excuse for its familiar and undisguised style. As the last, at my age it will not be suspected of adulation. For this, no motive exists. My design is to file among your archives some facts, which may meet the eye of a historian, as well as to give some pleasure to a patriot, who I believe has served his country faithfully, and has done what man can do to please his God.

With ardent wishes for your happiness, &c.

John Taylor.

TO JOHN TAYLOR.

Quincy, 12 April, 1824.

I have received with kindness and thankfulness your learned work upon the Constitution. I have had as much read to me as I have been able to hear, but intend to have it all read to me, if I live.

It is long since I have ceased to write, read, speak, or think upon theories of government, and now, at half way on my eighty-ninth year, I am incapable of either. I see you have treated me with honor and respect enough, but I think you have not correctly comprehended the intentions of my poor book. That work was written under the old confederation, and had no relation at all to the General Government. It respected only a State Government, and particularly the Constitution of Massachusetts, and others that resembled it, as against Mr. Turgot, who had censured them all. There is but one allusion to the General Government in the whole work; in that, I expressly say that Congress is not a representative body, but a diplomatic body, a collection of ambassadors from thirteen sovereign States. A consolidated government was never alluded to, or proposed, or recommended in any part of the work; nor indeed, in any moment of my life, did I ever approve of a consolidated government, or would I have given my vote for it. A consolidated government under a monarchy, an aristocracy or democracy, or a mixture of either, would have flown to pieces like a glass bubble under the first blow of a hammer on an anvil. Nor had I any thoughts of recommending any hereditary branch of any State Government. But I am incapable of thinking clearly, or pursuing any train of thought. Of the present Constitution I can only say, with father Paul, "*Esto perpetua.*" I sincerely wish it; but I cannot see how it can be converted into a consolidated government. But I cannot enlarge. Again I thank you for your present, and wish you may contribute to preserve the present Constitution.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 22 January, 1825.

Your letter of the 8th revived me. It is true that my hearing has been very good, but the last year it has decayed so much, that I am in a worse situation than you are. I cannot hear any of the common conversation of my family, without calling upon them to repeat it in a louder tone.

The Presidential election has given me less anxiety than I myself could have imagined.[1] The next administration will be a troublesome one, to whomsoever it falls, and our John has been too much worn to contend much longer with conflicting factions. I call him our John, because, when you were at the Cul de sac at Paris, he appeared to me to be almost as much your boy as mine. I have often speculated upon the consequences that would have ensued from my taking your advice, to send him to William and Mary College in Virginia for an education.

As to the decision of your author,[2] though I wish to see the book, I look upon it as a mere game at push-pin. Incision-knives will never discover the distinction between matter and spirit, or whether there is any or not. That there is an active principle of power in the universe, is apparent; but in what substance that active principle resides, is past our investigation. The faculties of our understanding are not adequate to penetrate the universe. Let us do our duty, which is to do as we would be done by; and that, one would think, could not be difficult, if we honestly aim at it.

Your university is a noble employment in your old age, and your ardor for its success does you honor; but I do not approve of your sending to Europe for tutors and professors. I do believe there are sufficient scholars in America, to fill your professorships and tutorships with more active ingenuity and independent minds than you can bring from Europe. The Euro-

[1] "I have had one advantage of you. This presidential election has given me few anxieties. With you this must have been impossible, independently of the question whether we are at last to end our days under a civil or military government?" *Extract from Mr. Jefferson's letter.*

[2] Flourens's Experiments on the functions of the nervous system in vertebrated animals.

peans are all deeply tainted with prejudices, both ecclesiastical and temporal, which they can never get rid of. They are all infected with episcopal and presbyterian creeds, and confessions of faith. They all believe that great Principle which has produced this boundless universe, Newton's universe and Herschell's universe, came down to this little ball, to be spit upon by Jews. And until this awful blasphemy is got rid of, there never will be any liberal science in the world.

I salute your fireside with best wishes and best affections for their health, wealth and prosperity.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Quincy, 23 January, 1825.

We think ourselves possessed, or, at least, we boast that we are so, of liberty of conscience on all subjects, and of the right of free inquiry and private judgment in all cases, and yet how far are we from these exalted privileges in fact! There exists, I believe, throughout the whole Christian world, a law which makes it blasphemy to deny or to doubt the divine inspiration of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, from Genesis to Revelations. In most countries of Europe it is punished by fire at the stake, or the rack, or the wheel. In England itself it is punished by boring through the tongue with a red-hot poker. In America it is not much better; even in our own Massachusetts, which I believe, upon the whole, is as temperate and moderate in religious zeal as most of the States, a law was made in the latter end of the last century, repealing the cruel punishments of the former laws, but substituting fine and imprisonment upon all those blasphemers upon any book of the Old Testament or New. Now, what free inquiry, when a writer must surely encounter the risk of fine or imprisonment for adducing any argument for investigation into the divine authority of those books? Who would run the risk of translating Dupuis? But I cannot enlarge upon this subject, though I have it much at heart. I think such laws a great embarrassment, great obstructions to the improvement of the

human mind. Books that cannot bear examination, certainly ought not to be established as divine inspiration by penal laws. It is true, few persons appear desirous to put such laws in execution, and it is also true that some few persons are hardy enough to venture to depart from them. But as long as they continue in force as laws, the human mind must make an awkward and clumsy progress in its investigations. I wish they were repealed. The substance and essence of Christianity, as I understand it, is eternal and unchangeable, and will bear examination forever, but it has been mixed with extraneous ingredients, which I think will not bear examination, and they ought to be separated. Adieu.

TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Quincy, 18 February, 1825.

My dear Son, — I have received your letter of the 9th.[1] Never did I feel so much solemnity as upon this occasion. The multitude of my thoughts, and the intensity of my feelings are too much for a mind like mine, in its ninetieth year. May the blessing of God Almighty continue to protect you to the end of your life, as it has heretofore protected you in so remarkable a manner from your cradle! I offer the same prayer for your lady and your family, and am your affectionate father.

John Adams.

TO JOHN WHITNEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CELEBRATING THE APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOURTH OF JULY, IN THE TOWN OF QUINCY.

Quincy, 7 June, 1826.

Your letter of the 3d instant, written in behalf of the committee of arrangements for the approaching celebration of our

[1] The day of his election as President of the United States.

National Independence, inviting me to dine on the 4th of July next with the citizens of Quincy at the Town Hall, has been received with the kindest emotions. The very respectful language with which the wishes of my fellow-townsmen have been conveyed to me by your committee, and the terms of affectionate regard towards me individually, demand my grateful thanks, which you will please to accept and to communicate to your colleagues of the committee.

The present feeble state of my health will not permit me to indulge the hope of participating with more than my best wishes in the joys and festivities and solemn services of that day, on which will be completed the fiftieth year from the birth of the independence of these United States. A memorable epoch in the annals of the human race; destined in future history to form the brightest or the blackest page, according to the use or the abuse of those political institutions by which they shall in time to come be shaped by the *human mind*.

I pray you, Sir, to tender in my behalf to our fellow-citizens my cordial thanks for their affectionate good wishes, and to be assured that I am very truly and affectionately, your and their friend and fellow-townsman.

John Adams.

TO MESSRS. JACOB B. TAYLOR, JOHN YATES CEBRA, STUART F. RANDOLPH, R. RIKER, AND HENRY ARCULARIUS, A COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS OF THE CITY CORPORATION OF NEW YORK.

Quincy, 10 June, 1826.

Gentlemen, — Your very polite and cordial letter of invitation, written to me in behalf of the city corporation of New York, has been gratefully received through the kindness of General J. Morton.

The anniversary you propose to celebrate, "with increased demonstrations of respect," in which you invite me to participate in person, is an event sanctioned by fifty years of experience, and it will become memorable by its increasing age, in proportion as its success shall demonstrate the blessings it im-

parts to our beloved country, and the maturity it may attain in the progress of time.

Not these United States alone, but a mighty continent, the last discovered, but the largest quarter of the globe, is destined to date the period of its birth and emancipation from the 4th of July, 1776.

Visions of future bliss in prospect, for the better condition of the human race, resulting from this unparalleled event, might be indulged, but sufficient unto the day be the glory thereof; and while you, gentlemen of the committee, indulge with your fellow-citizens of the city of New York in demonstrations of joy and effusions of hilarity worthy the occasion, the wonderful growth of the State, whose capital you represent, within the lapse of half a century, cannot fail to convince you that the indulgence of enthusiastic views of the future must be stamped with any epithet other than visionary.

I thank you, gentlemen, with much sincerity for the kind invitation with which you have honored me, to assist in your demonstrations of respect for the day and all who honor it. And in default of my personal attendance, give me leave to propose as a sentiment for the occasion,

Long and lasting prosperity to the City and State of New York!

I am, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

In the month of August, 1821, the Cadets of the United States Military Academy, under the command of Major Worth, paid a visit to Boston. One day was devoted by them to an excursion to the seat of Mr. Adams at Quincy. They were received by him, drawn up before the portico in front of his house, and in a voice then much broken with age, he made them the following address: —

My young Fellow-Citizens and Fellow-Soldiers, —

I rejoice that I live to see so fine a collection of the future defenders of their country in pursuit of honor under the auspices of the national government.

A desire of distinction is implanted by nature in every human bosom, and the general sense of mankind, in all ages and countries, cultivated and uncultivated, has excited, encouraged, and applauded this passion in military men more than in any other order of society. Military glory is esteemed the first and greatest of glories. As your profession is at least as solemn and sacred as any in human life, it behooves you seriously to consider, *what is glory?*

There is no real glory in this world or any other but such as arises from wisdom and benevolence. There can be no solid glory among men but that which springs from equity and humanity; from the constant observance of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. Battles, victories, and conquests, abstracted from their only justifiable object and end, which is justice and peace, are the glory of fraud, violence, and usurpation. What was the glory of Alexander and Cæsar? "The glimmering" which those "livid flames" in Milton "cast, pale and dreadful," or "the sudden blaze," which "far round illumin'd Hell."

Different — far different is the glory of Washington and his faithful colleagues! Excited by no ambition of conquest or avaricious desire of wealth; irritated by no jealousy, envy, malice, or revenge; prompted only by the love of their country, by the purest patriotism and philanthropy, they persevered, with invincible constancy, in defence of their country, her fundamental laws, her natural, essential and inalienable rights and liberties, against the lawless and ruthless violence of tyranny and usurpation. The biography of these immortal captains, and the history of their great actions, you will read and ruminate night and day. You need not investigate antiquity, or travel into foreign countries, to find models of excellence in military commanders, without a stain of ambition or avarice, tyranny, cruelty, or oppression towards friends or enemies.

In imitation of such great examples, in the most exalted transports of your military ardor, even in the day of battle, you will be constantly overawed by a

conscious sense of the dignity of your characters as men, as American citizens, and as Christians.

I congratulate you on the great advantages you possess for attaining eminence in letters and science, as well as in arms. These advantages are a precious deposit, which you ought to consider as a sacred trust, for which you are responsible to your country and to a higher tribunal. These advantages, and the habits you have acquired, will qualify you for any course of life you may choose to pursue.

That I may not fatigue you with too many words, allow me to address every one of you in the language of a Roman dictator to his master of the horse, after a daring and dangerous exploit for the safety of his country,

"*Macte virtute esto.*"

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